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PAK, NAQVI KEEP SUSPENSE ALIVE OVER WORLD CUP PARTICIPATION

After Bangladesh was removed from the event, PCB chair Mohsin Naqvi said the government will take final call about them playing the T20 WC

PCB KEEPING 'ALL OPTIONS' ON THE TABLE

After meeting Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Naqvi took to social media to confirm that final decision will be taken on Friday or Monday. "I had a productive meeting with the Prime Minister and briefed him on the ICC matter. He directed that we resolve it while keeping all options on the table," Naqvi posted on X.

OPT OUT OF WC OR BOYCOTT INDIA MATCH?

- This issue came about after Pakistan wanted to show solidarity to Bangladesh who were replaced by Scotland after requesting to shift their matches out of India.
- It is understood PM Sharif was briefed on multiple scenarios, including the possibility of boycotting just the India match

Feb 15

IS WHEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN ARE SCHEDULED TO PLAY IN COLOMBO

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

Free trade deal with EU done, signing today

A successful India makes the world more stable, says EU chief Ursula von der Leyen

PUSHPITA DEY @ New Delhi

AFTER several false starts, negotiations for the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement (FTA) concluded on Monday. A formal announcement will be made on Tuesday.

Confirming the development, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said: "Negotiations have been successfully concluded. The deal has been finalised."

Commerce ministry sources said while the pact will be announced on Tuesday, processes like legal scrubbing and ratification by EU member states could take another year.

The India-EU deal was closed in the presence of European Council President António Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who were in India as special guests for the Republic Day. "Their presence underscores the growing strength of the India-EU partnership and our commitment to shared values. The visit will add momentum to the deepening engagement and cooperation between India and Europe across diverse sectors," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a social media post.

Described as the 'mother of all deals' by the Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, the India-EU FTA will be signed after two decades of talks, which began in 2007. The talks were suspended in 2013 as both sides opted for certain protectionist measures. The negotiations were relaunched in June 2022.

"The European Union remains a vital economic & strategic partner for India, and we value our shared commitment to a mutually beneficial, ambitious India-EU FTA for the prosperity of our businesses and people," Goyal stated in his social media post.

Both sides will keep certain sensitive sectors out of the deal. India does not want to open up the dairy and agricultural sectors.

> **Negotiations have been successfully concluded. The deal has been finalised**
>
> Rajesh Agrawal, Commerce Secretary

"A successful India makes the world more stable, prosperous and secure. And we all benefit," Von der Leyen said. She even said that the engagement between India and the EU "will culminate tomorrow in the signature of our Security and Defence Partnership".

India has a trade surplus with the EU, which stood at $15 billion in FY2025, with exports of $75.9 billion against imports of $60.7 billion. The EU accounts for 17% of India's total goods exports and one-third of its IT services exports. Analysts say the FTA could boost India's exports to the region by over 50% in the next five years.

This is the fourth FTA India will be signing since 2025. Last year, it concluded FTAs with the UK, New Zealand and Oman.

PICS: PTI, SHEKHAR YADAV, KEVIN NASHON

From L: President Droupadi Murmu, President of European Commission Ursula von der Leyen and PM Narendra Modi after attending the 77th Republic Day parade in Delhi; IAF flypast in Operation Sindoor format comprising 2 MiG-29, 2 Rafale, 2 Su-30MKI and 1 Jaguar; Students perform in Bengaluru on Monday

New-age arsenal on display at R-Day parade

India-China relations have continued to improve and develop, aligning with interests of both countries and their people, and are of great significance for promoting world peace

Xi Jinping, China President

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to people of India on your 77th Republic Day. US-India share a historic bond as the world's oldest and largest democracies

Donald Trump, US President

JAVARIA RANA @ New Delhi

THE 77th Republic Day parade at Kartavya Path on Monday brought Operation Sindoor and India's military might to the forefront with patriotic commemoration under the 'Vande Mataram' theme. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President António Costa attended as chief guests, marking the first collective participation of the European Union leadership at India's national celebrations.

Cultural and historical elements linked to the Independence struggle were reflected in tableaux from different states along the Kartavya Path, as the official theme was '150 Years of Vande Mataram'.

The parade featured a European Union defence contingent as well, with four flag bearers on three vehicles carrying flags of the European Union, the EU Military Staff and EU naval missions Operation Atalanta and Operation Aspides, respectively.

The tri-services tableau, "Operation Sindoor: Victory Through Jointness," was a standout which recreated the strike at Muridke terror camp in Pakistan destroyed by the Indian Armed Forces on May 7 last year. It also showcased the S-400 anti-missile system used in Operation Sindoor, HAROP loitering munitions, Rafale jets with SCALP missiles, and a Su-30 MKI launching BrahMos at hardened shelters.

In a first, the military columns were presented in a phased "battle array", with ground and aerial combat elements displayed in a sequence intended to reflect contemporary battlefield deployment.

The IAF staged a 29-aircraft flypast, led by the new 'Sindoor' formation, comprising Rafale, Su-30 MKI, MiG-29 and Jaguar that were deployed during the four-day clash with Pakistan.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation showcased its Long-Range Anti-Ship Missile, dubbed the "carrier killer", for the first time. The system incorporates the novel hypersonic glide vehicle technology.

The display also featured major strike and air defence systems, including the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile and the Akash Medium Range Surface to Air Missile.

A total of 30 tableaux participated in the parade.

India, Canada work on March visit of PM Carney to push trade talks

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

INDIA and Canada are working to finalise a visit by Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney to New Delhi in March, as both sides seek to accelerate negotiations on a bilateral trade deal.

The visit would mark the next phase in warming ties between the two countries, which have moved to restart talks on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) after a diplomatic impasse.

New Delhi and Ottawa are in talks to finalise the terms of reference for the CEPA negotiations, which aim to double bilateral trade to $50 billion by

2030, sources said. The push for a CEPA has gained urgency amid rising trade tensions with the United States.

India is currently subject to 50% US tariffs on certain goods, while Canada faces 35% levy under measures imposed by the Trump administration. Against this backdrop, New Delhi has sought to diversify export markets and expand trade agreements beyond US.

The two sides are also looking to deepen cooperation in the civilian nuclear sector, and India is exploring increased investment from Canadian pension funds.

Carney's remarks at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos are widely seen as Canada's shifting strategic posture. He said Canada was pursuing new trade and security partnerships with countries including India, Qatar, Thailand, as well as Mercosur and ASEAN. Ties with Canada have substantially improved since Carney became PM last year.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot attend the 77th Republic Day celebrations at Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw Parade Ground in Bengaluru on Monday | KEVIN NASHON

Guv: People must elect those with understanding of Statute

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

DAYS after uneasy developments between the Karnataka government and the Lok Bhavan, Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, in his Republic Day speech on Monday, said the most-important task before the people is to elect representatives who work with an understanding of the core spirit of the Constitution.

"The factors that influence the functioning of the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary are the people of the country and the political parties they chose as instruments to fulfill their aspirations. The most important task before them is to elect representatives who work with an understanding of the core spirit of the Constitution and to preserve democracy through the continuous questioning and dialogue," Gehlot said, referring to what Mahatma Gandhi had emphasised.

The Governor had objected to the state government's attack on the Central government's move to replace the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGA) with Viksit Bharat Guarantee Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (VB-GRAM G). In his address to the joint legislature on Thursday, Gehlot had read just three lines from the speech provided by the state government. **P5**

Kuki village torched in fresh Manipur violence

A building burns after it was set on fire in Manipur's K Songlung village | x

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

FRESH violence erupted in Manipur on Monday with a Naga rebel group burning down several houses belonging to members of the Kuki community in Kangpokpi district.

Claiming responsibility for the arson attack at K Songlung (II) village, the Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF) said it was targeting illegal poppy cultivation, narcotics trafficking and encroachment of the territory of the Zeliangrong Inpui Naga people by illegal immigrants.

Reacting to the incident, the Kuki-Zo organisation Committee on Tribal Unity threatened to shut down two national highways from midnight on January 27 if the authorities failed to apprehend the perpetrators within 24 hours.

EXPRESS READ

Cong, Oppn to stage protests today

Bengaluru: The Congress will take out a 'Raj Bhavan Chalo' rally to protest against the VB-G RAM G Act, while the BJP and JDS will organise a protest against the Congress legislators allegedly insulting Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot on Tuesday | **P4**

Rajeev Gowda arrested from Kerala

Chikkaballapur: Congress leader Rajeev Gowda, who was accused of threatening Sidlaghatta Municipal Commissioner Amrutha, was arrested from Kerala, sources said on Monday. He had absconded after two separate cases were filed against him | **P4**

Two tourists die as boat capsizes in Udupi

Udupi: Two tourists died after a boat carrying 14 passengers capsized near Kodi Bengre delta beach in Udupi district on Monday. Police said not all tourists were wearing safety jackets. They were employees of a call centre and came from Saraswatipuram in Mysuru | **P5**

EARLY ONSET

Summer temp may be 1-4°C above norm this yr

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

Karnataka could experience a severe summer this year, with temperatures going up by nearly 3 degrees Celsius more than the normal in certain pockets. Also, it could be an early summer as temperatures are expected to start going up from February 15, experts said.

The state normally experiences summer between March and May with hot and humid conditions, and temperatures hovering between 28 degrees Celsius and 43 degrees Celsius. While the coastal region, including Dakshina Kannada and Uttara Kannada districts, experience high humidity, north-interior regions face extreme heat. Bengaluru and other parts in south-interior Karnataka could face temperatures around 1 degree Celsius above normal, while coastal and north Karnataka regions may experience 2 degrees Celsius or more. In some extreme cases, it could even go up by 4 degrees Celsius above normal.

GS Srinivasa Reddy, former Director, Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC), told *TNIE* that

a preliminary report by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) stated that summer temperatures will be above normal for the entire country. "We expect similar conditions in Karnataka, with temperatures going 1-2 degrees Celsius above normal in certain pockets, especially in the Kalyan-Karnataka region, like Raichur, Ballari, Yadgir and Kalaburagi and also a few places in Kittur-Karnataka," he said.

Other experts said the state could witness very less rainfall in January and February, around 8 mm in March and 36 mm in April. "As heat intensifies, there will be thunderstorm activities, which could occur in early March, as we expect early summer that could set in by the second week of February," said an officer from the Karnataka State Disaster Management. **P7**

After pilots complain, HAL revokes nod to switch on floodlights at KGA

ANUBHAB ROY @ Bengaluru

THE Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) has revoked the approval given to operate floodlights at night at the Karnataka Golf Association (KGA) as they are posing a risk to aircraft landing at the HAL Airport. Despite HAL warning KGA multiple times, the harsh, bright lights were not being switched off and pilots had complained to HAL about difficulty in operating their aircraft.

HAL first communicated to KGA on January 12, asking it to

switch off the floodlights, citing that non-compliance would be a violation of Section 66 of the Aircraft Rules of 1937, Part 1 - Series 4 of the Civil Aviation Requirements (CARs), and the Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam (Indian Aircraft Act) of 2024.

As per the letter written by HAL General Manager V Sri Krishna Prasad to KGA Honorary Secretary Madhur Sood on January 20, KGA not only failed to comply with the directions sent on January 12, but also disregarded repeated instructions sent on January 16 and 17 by keeping the floodlights on. As pilots had continued to complain to HAL about the harsh lights, the approval was withdrawn.

Sood told *TNIE*, "The floodlights will not be on today (January 26)", but declined to comment further, adding that he was out of station. **P7**

ALMANAC TODAY

• **Tuesday:** 27.01.2026 • **Year:** Vishwavasu • **Ayana:** Uttharayana • **Ritu:** Sisira • **Masa:** Magha • **Paksha:** Sukla • **Tithi:** Navami 4.41 pm • **Nakshatra:** Bharani 9.16 am • Moon in Vrishabha Rashi • **Rahukaala:** 03:00 am to 04:30 am • **Gulikakala:** 12:00 pm to 01:30 pm • **Yamaganda:** 09:00 am to 10:30 am

WEATHER

MIN 17°C | MAX 29°C

FORECAST Mostly cloudy.

Sunrise 06.46 am · Sunset 06.18 pm · Moonrise 12.58 am · Moonset 12.43 pm

EJIPURA FLYOVER: ST JOHN'S NOD FOR 5 PIERS ON CAMPUS

B-SMILE now aims to finish the 2.38 km flyover by June 30

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

IN a big relief to Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure Limited (B-SMILE), which is monitoring the ongoing works of the 2.5-km stretch of Ejipura flyover connecting South East Bengaluru to Bengaluru East and other parts with ease, the management of St. John's National Academy of Health Sciences has given nod to erecting five piers (pillars) on its premises, which is crucial for the completion of the project.

According to Raghavendra Prasad, Chief Engineer, B-SMILE, Minister Ramalinga Reddy and GBA officials were able to take the St. John's authorities into confidence. "They are also willing to coordinate. We have to mark the area for piers, and with these developments, we can finish the project by June 30," Prasad said.

The official further added that the 2.38-km-long flyover on Ejipura Main Road has a total of 762 segments to be cast for the flyover, out of which 645 segments have already been cast. The remaining 117 segments are yet to be cast. So far, 490 segments have already been erected.

Meanwhile Chief Commissioner of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) M Maheshwar Rao instructed officials to mark the required land at St. John's compound wall of St. John's. In this regard, discussions were held with the St. John's management, who have agreed to permit the use of the required land. Accordingly, the engineers and contractors are instructed to mark the area and commence the work immediately," he said. He added that barricades would be installed as a safety measure while the work on the five portal piers is in progress. Further, space should be provided for storing construction materials until the work is completed, and the compound wall should be reconstructed immediately after the completion of the work.

> **Once the flyover is completed, traffic from Koramangala, Madiwala, Jakkasandra, and the surroundings will be eased to a great extent**
>
> Ramalinga Reddy, Minister for Transport

Minister Ramalinga Reddy stated that, the benefit for the public through this project was explained to St John's authorities and they were convinced. "Once completed, the traffic from Koramangala, Madiwala, Jakkasandra, and the surroundings will be eased to a great extent," said Reddy.

Fr. Jesudoss Rajamanicam, Director of the institution, said the institution has always supported and extended its cooperation with the government whenever it takes a public project that involves the welfare of all. "Whatever can be done keeping the legal framework intact will always be supported by us," said the director.

and immediately begin work to install five portal piers for the Ejipura flyover.

After a meeting with officials from the traffic police department and St. John's National Academy of Health Sciences regarding the Ejipura flyover project, he said, "The construction of the Ejipura flyover is currently progressing at a fast pace. On the left side, while moving from Kendriya Sadan towards Ejipura, a small portion of land belonging to St. John's is required to install five portal piers. The portal piers need to be constructed along the footpath and adjoining the

JP Nagar puppy murder: Accused still at large

ANUBHAB ROY @ Bengaluru

ABOUT two weeks after the horrific abuse and murder of a neonatal puppy in JP Nagar, it seems like all leads have gone cold. The absconding accused is still at large, with his phone number active, and none of the missing pups has been found yet. Activists associated with the case allege that while authorities have not turned an entirely deaf ear to the issue, few are actually eager to help.

On January 9, a man named Nepal Kiran was caught on camera brutally strangling a neonatal puppy and slamming it against a wall in JP Nagar post midnight. He was later identified as a valet driver from a third-party agency at a fast food outlet. The body of the helpless puppy was found on January 13, while seven more were missing, and are feared dead.

While an FIR was registered against Kiran at Puttenahalli police station, he is yet to be tracked and captured, though his phone number is said to be active.

The recovered body of the dog had broken ribs and a broken spine, according to Manjari Chaitanya, founder of South Bengaluru Cares. The postmortem was conducted by Dr Karthik, who stated that he had shared the findings with the police.

The grievousness of the act is anything but anomalous, according to activists associated with the case, who believe the Supreme Court verdict against stray dogs has opened the floodgates of cruelty against animals. "The Supreme Court has made matters worse for dogs. The verdict has given an upper hand to anyone and everyone. People have openly been citing the orders, though they have not understood what they actually mean," says Vikash A Bafna, founder of Friend For Animal Trust. Bafna also rues the lack of support from the police department adding that "one out of 10" from the force cares about the issue.

Activist Priyam Chhetri is not hopeful that the missing puppies will return. "It is very hard to find dogs once they are relocated, especially puppies," she says.

CCTV footage shows Nepal Kiran killing the puppy in JP Nagar

WINTER SHOWERS

While the entire day was chilly and gloomy, the sudden drizzle on Monday caught most people by surprise. Only a few ventured out with umbrellas | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

Cong protest: Traffic around Freedom Park redirected

The police imposed traffic regulations on multiple roads around Freedom Park, preparing for the protest organised by Congress party today from 9am to 5pm. Alternate routes have been issued to ensure smooth flow of traffic in the vicinity

- Traffic will be restricted on stretches leading from Shantala Junction and Khode Junction towards Anand Rao Flyover, Old JDS office Cross, and Sheshadri Road towards Freedom Park. Motorists heading towards Freedom Park from the above areas have been advised to travel via Lulu Mall, KFM, Rajiv Gandhi Circle, Mantri Mall, Swastik Circle, Sheshadripuram, Nehru Circle, Race Course Flyover, and Race Course Road.
- Traffic moving from Mysuru Bank Circle towards Chalukya Circle has been advised to use K.G. Road, Sagar Junction, K.G. Junction, Elite Junction, T.B. Road, KFM, Rajiv Gandhi Circle, Swastik Circle, Nehru Circle, Race Course Flyover, and Race Course Road.
- Vehicles travelling from Chalukya Circle to Mysuru Bank Circle should take the route via Lalbagh Road Junction (LRD), Raj Bhavan Road, Infantry Road, and Indian Express junction.
- Vehicles coming from Y. Ramachandra Road towards Freedom Park via Kalidasa Road–Kanakadasa Circle have been advised to take a right turn at Kanakadasa Junction towards Sagar Junction.
- Traffic from Maurya Junction/Subbanna Circle towards Freedom Park should take a right turn at Subbanna Junction towards Anand Rao Circle.

ITS' CURTAINS FOR LALBAGH FLOWER SHOW

The crowd on the last day of the Lalbagh Flower Show on Monday | KEVIN NASHON

1,94,165 Visitors on **Jan 26** (1,46,051 adults, 19,054 children and 30,060 students)

₹65,01,198 Revenue collected on **Jan 26**

8,10,293 No. of visitors to Lalbagh Flower Show from Jan 14 to 26

₹2.75 cr Revenue generated during 13-day show

5.17 lakh Adults, 85,704 children and 2,08,176 students visited the show

Citizens launch letter campaign to keep parks, lakes open the entire day

RASHMI PATIL @ Bengaluru

RESIDENTS of South Bengaluru have started a letter campaign to keep parks and lakes open for public use from 5am to 10pm. Hundreds of residents from different localities formed a group and have been writing letters to Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao, urging him to keep parks and lakes open for recreational activities.

Currently, Bengaluru has over 1,100 parks and 250 lakes. In December 2025, GBA issued new timings of 5am to 11am and 4pm to 8pm for parks and lakes.

Shridhar Manek, a resident of South Bengaluru who started the campaign, said, "I launched the letter campaign on social media two weeks ago. Many residents joined the campaign, and wrote letters to GBA Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao, urging him to keep parks open so the public may go for walks whenever they wish. Sometimes, people would just want to spend time in these places. The campaign is on till January 31 and people can send more letters to the GBA commissioner until they open parks full time."

Deepak Joy Cheenath, another resident who sent a letter to the commissioner, said, "I am a resident of Koramangala but I work at HSR Layout. Opening parks and lakes full time last year was a good initiative. After lunch, most of us would take a break and go for a walk in the parks. Since there are a lot of vehicles on the roads and footpaths aren't pedestrian-friendly, people prefer to spend time in parks and lake premises."

Cheenath added, "Once when I was speaking on the phone in a park, the gates got locked. After some time, I realised and requested the guard to open the gates. These spaces are supposed to be kept open for recreational activities, why shut them?"

GBA Commissioner Rao and Chief Engineer of Bengaluru South City Corporation Basavaraj Kabade were not available for comment.

EXPRESS READ

Mukund is POWERGRID exec director

Mukund Sharad Hejib has assumed the charge as Executive Director (ED) of Southern Region-II of Power Grid Corporation of India Limited(POWERGRID), consisting of substations in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry. He is an Electrical Engineer from Jiwaji University, Gwalior. He is a technical expert with more than 35 years and has gained extensive experience across critical domains such as operations, projects, ERP, and information technology. **ENS**

Bank of India conducts cybersecurity awareness programme

Bengaluru: Bank of India (Bengaluru Zone) conducted an awareness programme on fraud and risk mitigation on January 23, in view of cyber and digital frauds increasingly targeting senior citizens. The programme focused on common fraud patterns and the precautions one can take to avoid them. General Manager Vasu Dev from the Fraud Risk Management Department (Mumbai head office) addressed the participants during the programme. He said that special attention was given to the vulnerability of senior citizens across the country, alluding to cases related to digital arrests, KYC updation through APK files and clicking on unauthorised links. **ENS**

Horoscopes By Holiday

HOLIDAY MATHIS

27th January : On Wonky Cosmic Favors Mars and Pluto conjunct in Aquarius ask, "How would things be now if you had gotten everything you wanted back then?" Perhaps not as good. Sometimes we want what's best for us, but often hindsight has us happy we didn't always get our way. So, when you wish the cosmic gift came with a gift receipt, just wait a season. Maybe it's actually something you can use.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
You're not trying to make a memory, but you'll make one anyway. In fact, you can assume others will remember today for years to come. So, what experience would you like to create? You'll steer it well.

TAURUS (Apr. 20 - May 20)
The "curiosity gap" describes when someone sees enough to know there's more, and their attention and motivation increase. Cliffhangers, teasers, unfinished stories and gradual self-disclosure all work on this principle, and you will, too, as you let conversations slowly unfold.

GEMINI (May 21 - June 21)
Unruly emotions bubble to the surface. Instead of trying to squash them down, find a way to express them, whether with games, exercise or art. When you get it out, someone will meet you with insight you couldn't get on your own.

CANCER (June 22 - July 22)
Motivation is like skin care -- a ritual that needs daily repetition. How can you keep yourself motivated? Add a muse, a deadline, a pep talk, a reward system -- anything to keep it compelling to return to and easy to repeat.

LEO (July 23 - Aug. 22)
When you want something so much, you're always going for it, even without realizing it. Things come together in an exciting way now, the result of moves you've been making toward your goal over the course of many months.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)
Sticking with only the people you know is boring for everyone. You keep the social swirl lively by extending invitations widely, including new energy and creating an atmosphere of openness and kindness.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 - Oct. 23)
Keep marching forward. Don't inch, don't tiptoe, don't run. March. The steady, measured, determined gait will not only get you there, it will make it easy for others to follow. People rarely march alone. You will be joined.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 21)
You're on a roll. Stay focused on what's going great in your life and the great happenings will just keep coming. This momentum will continue to build until it's interrupted. The trick is to guard against interruption.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)
It feels like you're either using every moment or the moments are using you. Whichever way it goes, the result is the same; life is action-packed. You'll have tangible products to show for your effort.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)
Your belief in fundamental human equality and strong aversion to arrogance will come into play. Humility is strength, not weakness. The low stance is the high road. Once again, being grounded will lead to a better outcome than dominance or superiority.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)
Improvements happen all around you, which is no coincidence, since you're the one improving things. You feel most like yourself when helping solve a problem. And when there's no problem? That's when you take what's fine and make it sublime.

PISCES (Feb. 19 - Mar 20)
You are skilled at the art of making people look good, introducing them in a flattering way and saying the things that make people feel seen and respected. You'll use this talent well today.

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle ⬇

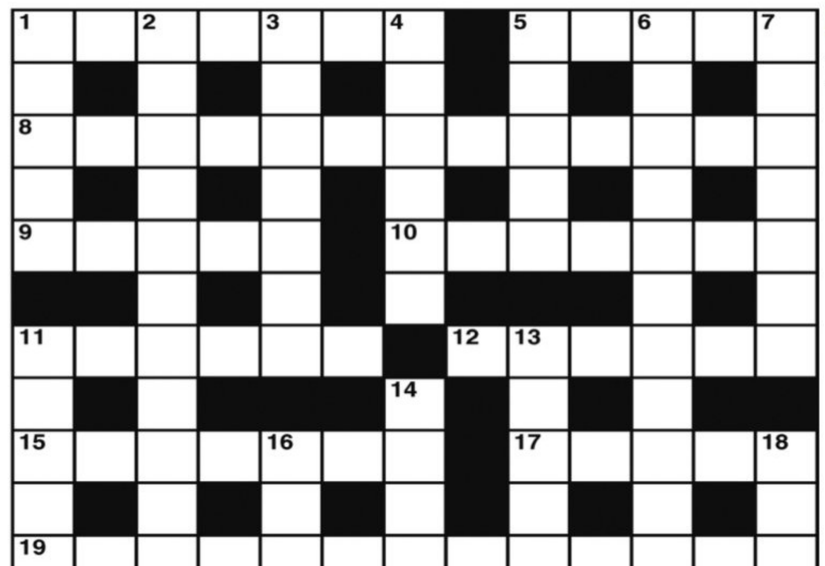
	6	9		5		3	1	
			7	1				
1	3		2					
			3	4			9	5
3			5		9			2
9	5			2	7			
					1		6	9
				8	5			
	9	1		3		8	5	

8	3	2	6	4	9	1	5	7
7	5	1	8	2	3	4	6	9
6	9	4	1	7	5	3	8	2
2	6	8	9	5	1	7	3	4
1	7	5	3	8	4	9	2	6
9	4	3	7	6	2	5	1	8
5	8	7	4	1	6	2	9	3
4	2	9	5	3	8	6	7	1
3	1	6	2	9	7	8	4	5

SUDOKU MEDIUM

TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



CROSS WORD

ACROSS

1 Painter in a knot (7)
5 Flying heart specialist (5)
8 I pass bed linen tentatively as essential (13)
9 Growing girl? (5)
10 Time of day when engine breaks down - about five (7)
11 Untidy little beasts (6)
12 Moor in Arabian chorus (6)
15 Put me back in the box and dispose of the body (7)
17 Horses fired with enthusiasm in Westerns (5)
19 Retired down under in soft berth (13)
20 Has an inclination for men who are dissipated (5)
21 Continue to behave strangely (5,2)

DOWN

1 Case for cheese that is overstrong (5)
2 Take him for wed perhaps? Right off target (4,2,3,4)
3 It's a pen of new design filled to overflowing (2,5)
4 The French included in smooth-running team (6)
5 Status of a holy man in church (5)
6 When most people stop work (6,7)
7 It profoundly improves a channel of communication (7)
11 A match for the devil (7)
13 Central rule can be broken (7)
14 Decimal used in some tricky calculation (6)
16 A bad shot for a musketeer (5)
18 Litter of battle (5)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Tapes, 8 Families, 9 Minus, 10 Pharisee, 11 Denim, 12 Yea, 16 Stance, 17 Macaws, 18 Sty, 23 Fowls, 24 Hand over, 25 Annoy, 26 Founders, 27 Brisk.

Down: 2 Anisette, 3 Esurient, 4 Daphne, 5 Mitre, 6 Rinse, 7 Osier, 12 Yes, 13 Amy, 14 Schooner, 15 Swallows, 19 Theory, 20 Chaff, 21 End up, 22 Woods.

JUMBLE

UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS.

BY DAVID L. HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

TUYOH

SYSAE

UGRIAT

LNHICC

It doesn't feel like I'm wearing metal! You're the best!
I've been armoring the Round Table for years.
DURING THE MIDDLE AGES, THIS TAILOR SPECIALIZED IN ARMOR FOR KNIGHTS. IT WAS HIS ---
12
2
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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: _____ _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: TROLL COUNT INFORM CRAYON
Answer: Customers arrived at the new shoe store — ON FOOT

The Malmaruti police arrested two youths from Sangli district of Maharashtra and seized two country-made pistols along with four live cartridges during an operation near Katri, close to KLE Hospital in Belagavi, in the early hours of Sunday

TECHIE BOOKED FOR MURDER

A drunken brawl, reckless driver and instant death

Youth clings on to SUV, sustains fatal injuries as driver loses control

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

The SUV was completely damaged when accused Roshan Hegde (left) went on the rampage, killing Prashanth

A shocking quarrel between two friends over a cigarette lighter, while under the influence of alcohol, ended in the death of a 33-year-old man. What initially appeared to be an accident was later revealed to be a case of murder. The incident took place in Kammasandra village in Hebbagodi police station limits on Sunday night.

The deceased was identified as Prashanth M, a resident of Veerasandra. The accused Roshan Hegde (36), a software engineer from Udupi and a resident of Vignan Nagar, was arrested.

Police said around 9.30pm Sunday, a group of five friends was consuming alcohol at a playground in Kammasandra. A quarrel broke out between Roshan and Prashanth over a cigarette lighter, which escalated when the latter allegedly assaulted the former with a beer bottle, causing an injury to his tongue. Following the altercation, Roshan decided to leave the spot in his SUV but Prashanth followed him and hopped on to the footboard of the vehicle, all the while abusing him. Roshan drove recklessly for nearly 400 metres, during which he lost control of the vehicle, crashed into a compound wall and later rammed a roadside tree. Prashanth, who was hanging on to the left-side window of the SUV, sustained severe head injuries and died on the spot, while Roshan suffered minor injuries.

Police said the incident was captured on CCTV and the car's dashcam. Footage reportedly shows Prashanth telling Roshan he would be responsible for his death and asking him to slow down. A murder case was registered at Hebbagodi police station, and the accused was arrested within an hour of the FIR being filed.

Prashanth's mother, Anu, told reporters her son was extremely passionate about cricket and had participated in a cricket tournament held in Kammasandra, which his team lost on Saturday. An argument had reportedly broken out between her son and Roshan during the tournament. After returning home that day, Prashanth had expressed disappointment over the team's loss. On Sunday evening, he went to Kammasandra ground and did not return.

BMTC fines 2,801 ticketless passengers, collects ₹6 lakh

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) collected fines of Rs 6,34,865 after a series of intense checks to curb ticketless travel and revenue leakage. Across the city, 18,409 buses trips were checked and 2,801 ticketless passengers were caught in December.

Also, action was taken against male passengers occupying seats reserved for women. In all, 250 men were fined Rs 25,000 under provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. Overall, fines worth Rs 6,59,865 were collected from 3,051 passengers.

Also, 1,748 cases were registered against conductors. BMTC urged passengers to always carry valid tickets, day passes or monthly passes while travelling to avoid penalties and help the organisation improve services. It also appealed to male passengers to vacate seats reserved for women and ensure a safe and respectful travel environment.

BMTC bus reverses into moving train, no casualties

Bengaluru: A BMTC bus was damaged after reversing into a moving train near Sadaramangala, close to the Whitefield Panel Cabin railway station in Kadugodi, on Monday morning. There were no passengers on the bus at the time of the incident, while the conductor escaped with minor injuries. The train was travelling from Bengaluru to Tata Nagar, Jharkhand, when the BMTC bus heading towards Kadugodi bus stop allegedly entered railway property to avoid a long route around 9.10 am. The bus driver, while attempting to take a left turn on a parallel road running along the railway track, failed to negotiate the turn and reversed the bus, ramming into the moving train. The rear portion of the bus was damaged. A case has been registered against the bus driver at Cantonment Railway Police Station for trespassing into railway property, causing damage to railway property, and for rash and negligent driving. Later, railway officials erected a concrete wall to prevent vehicular movement on railway property. **ENS**

Domestic dispute complaints see major jump in Bengaluru

DHIYA VEER @Bengaluru

COMPLAINTS related to domestic violence, harassment and marital disputes reported by women to Vanitha Sahayavani, a counselling initiative of the Bengaluru City Police, rose sharply in 2025, according to official data.

The number of complaints increased from an average of 275 cases per month in 2024 to nearly 400 cases per month in 2025. Overall, the centres handled about 3,300 cases in 2024, compared to over 4,348 cases in 2025.

Officials said the rise reflects changing responses to marital distress rather than a proportional increase in domestic conflict. In 2025, complaints related to marital maladjustment with spouses emerged as the largest category, with 1,266 cases, marginally higher than physical and mental domestic violence complaints, which stood at 1,248 cases.

Court referrals, including divorce and maintenance proceedings, also increased, while reconciliation accounted for a smaller share of outcomes compared to the previous year.

Dr Bindya Yohannan, Joint Secretary in charge of Parihar, the parent wing of Vanitha Sahayavani, cautioned against interpreting the figures as representative of society at large. "These numbers reflect reporting behaviour among women who approach police-linked counselling centres, not the overall prevalence of marital distress," she said.

She attributed the rise in complaints partly to greater financial independence and family support among women. "Reduced economic dependence on spouses appears to be lowering tolerance for prolonged marital distress," she said.

A significant proportion of complainants come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, where women may face less pressure to continue marriages at any cost, she added. A private family counsellor noted that factors such as wedding expenses, family expectations and close social networks often influence women's willingness to seek police intervention.

Taken together, the data suggests a shift in how women respond to marital conflict, with counselling and legal avenues increasingly seen as viable options.

Woman dies by suicide, kin allege dowry harassment

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

A 24-year-old woman allegedly ended her life by hanging at her residence near Yediyur in Banashankari police station limits on Sunday. The deceased has been identified as Kirthi, a homemaker. She had married Guruprasad (27), a gym trainer, two-and-a-half years ago. The couple was residing in Yediyur. According to the police, the couple went for a walk on Sunday morning. After returning home, Guruprasad left to play badminton. When he returned later and knocked on the door several times, there was no response. He then called a friend, broke open the door, and found his wife hanging from the ceiling fan in the room. He immediately alerted the police.

The police said that Kirthi's parents have lodged a dowry harassment complaint against her husband. Family members alleged that Guruprasad had earlier harassed his wife and her family over dowry, which was later settled. They further alleged that he had recently been harassing her for money for the construction of a new house, which may have led Kirthi to take the extreme step.

CALL FOR HELP

If you are having suicidal thoughts, or are worried about a friend or need emotional support, someone is always there to listen. Call Sneha Foundation - **04424640050,** Tele Manas **-14416** (available 24x7) or Call, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences' helpline - **02225521111,** which is available Monday to Saturday from 8 am to 10 pm.

Bangalore Trades Association celebrates 77th Republic Day

The 77th Republic Day was celebrated by the Bangalore Trades Association (BTA) on Monday in association with the Chamundeshwari Kannada Sangha. The BTA president addressed the gathering. P Suresh Kumar, senior general manager, The New Indian Express, was the guest of honour and Wing Commander (Rtd.) Dheeraj Yadav was the chief guest. BTA honorary secretary Rajesh Bantia, president of Chamundeshwari Kannada Sangha Ramesh Yadav, secretary of the Sangha Purushottam Yadav, and BTA vice president Vijayshekar Ravi Deepam were also present. **ENS**

EXPRESS READ

Two-wheeler rider tries to assault car driver

Bengaluru: In a road rage incident, a two-wheeler rider allegedly abused and attempted to assault a car driver over a trivial row in Bengaluru Central on Monday. According to a video posted on X by a car user named Praveen MN, "On Republic Day, a man jumped the signal and almost collided with my car. When I shouted at him, he stopped and said, 'My bike, my rules, my road, my wish.' When I asked him to say the same to the cops, he tried to slap me for recording the incident." The Commercial Street police have registered a case and are searching for the accused. **ENS**

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that my clients are intending to purchase the schedule property from V. RAJENDRA PRASAD & R.VANAJAKSHI, residing at No.28, "Sri.Raghavendra Nilaya", 13th Cross, 20th Main, Venkateshwara Layout, BTM Layout, 1st Stage, Bengaluru, Karnataka – 560068, claiming to be the owner of Flat No.F-1 (2 BHK), IN THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE Apartment "V R P & PRABHAVATHI HEIGHTS," measuring 1130 Sq. feet of super built up area with 341 Square feet UDS, agreed to sell the same in favour of my Clients **ANUSHA R.A & ROSHAN VEDAPRAKASH.S**, Therefore any person/s, co-partner/s of the owners, LRs., or any other person having any claim, any objection, dispute/litigation for the above intended sale transaction or opposing the sale of the Schedule property to my client, whatsoever shall submit their written objections, with the documentary evidence details of dispute/s thereof along with the supporting documents **within 7 days** from the date of publication hereof, deteriorating which such claim/s or objections, if any, shall be considered as waived and /or discharged forever, and Any objections received subsequently shall not consider and my clients will proceed to purchase the schedule property of Residential Apartment bearing Flat No.F-1 (2 BHK), IN THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE Apartment "V R P & PRABHAVATHI HEIGHTS," measuring 1130 Sq. feet of super built up area with 341 Square feet of UDS , formed in Site No.345, survey No.308, situated at Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Totally measuring 2729 Sq. feet and schedule A bounded as : **East by :** Road,
West by : Private property,
North by : Site No.346,
South by : Private property.
Place: Bengaluru Date: 26.01.2026
S.A. Law Associates
No.29/1, Old No.54, G.floor,
Shanthinagar, Bengaluru-27

PUBLIC NOTICE

MY CLIENT INTENDS TO PURCHASE THE SCHEDULE PROPERTY FROM ITS OWNER MR.K.C.RAMESH S/o. late Chinnappa, AGED ABOUT 47 YEARS, RESIDING AT, Kembathahalli Village Uttarahalli Hobli Bangalore – 560083, **AADHAAR NO.909863853667.**

Any person/s or any organization or Financial Institute Asserting any rights, title, claim or charge in the schedule property ,having any claims against the property/or its owner/s to such sale in favour of my client should write to the undersigned **within 3 Days from** issuing of this public Notice. With all documentary proof/s on which they are their rights over the schedule property or any part thereof after which period my client shall proceed on the basis that there is no claims of whatsoever nature with regards to the schedule property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

ALL THAT PORTION OF THE PROPERTY RESIDENTIAL **SITE NO.63. KHATA NO. 44/5.BBMP E -AASTHI PID NO.7318314980. BBMP NEW MUNICIPAL KATHA NO.44/144/5/63. IN SY NO.44/5,** SITUATED AT, KEMBATHAHALLI VILLAGE,UTTARAHALLI HOBLI, BANGALORE SOUTH TALUK, BBMP WARD NO.196. BANGALORE **MEASURING EAST TO WEST 40 FEET AND NORTH TO SOUTH 30 FEET TOTALLY MEASURING 1200 SQ.FT**, BOUNDED ON EAST BY :ROAD, WEST BY: SITE NO.72, NORTH BY: SITE NO.64, SOUTH BY: SITE NO.62.

S. RASHEED SAHEB, ADVOCATE
NO.42.6TH B CROSS BALAJINAGARA
DRC POST BANGALORE-29.
(M) 09448569509, 9740893190.
mail ID;rasheed.sab12@gmail.com

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER (Through KPP portal only)

BWSSB invites Tenders from eligible contractors for the following Works:

Office of the Chief Engineer (UWP), 5th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K. G. Road, Bangalore-09.

Division	IFT Number	Amount Put to Tender / EMD Amount	Last date & Time for submission of tender	Date & Time for opening of tender
WWM-H&A. Valley-2	BWSSB/EE(WWM-H& AV)-2/PB-1/918/2025-26 Date:22.01.2026 (3rd Call)	Rs.28.75 Lakh / Rs.0.58 Lakh	03-02-2026 upto 3.00 p.m.	05-02-2026 at 3.30 p.m.

Sd/- Executive Engineer (WWM-H&A. Valley)-2.

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the signed office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/AAPL/RO5203/25-26

STATE BANK OF INDIA

Retail Assets Central Processing Centre – II Koramangala
#12, Ground, 2nd & 3rd Floor,80 Feet Road,1st Block, Koramangala, Bangalore-560034. Karnataka, India. Email: maintracpc2.ban@sbi.co.in

POSSESSION NOTICE [RULE - 8(1)]
(For Immovable Property)

A/c No.: SBI/RACPC/SISIR/KRMANGALA/ HL/39965393494.

Whereas

The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the State Bank of India, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (No.3 of 2002) issued a **Demand Notices** dated **15.10.2025** issued, calling upon the **Borrower: 1). Mrs. Priyanka Gupta D/o Mr. Brijess Prasad Gupta**, No.1, D Block, Concorde Manhathans, Neeladri Road, Electronic City-01, Bangalore-560100. **Also, at: 1). Mrs. Priyanka Gupta D/o Mr. Brijess Prasad Gupta** #401,7th Cross Right Sri Sai Green Apartment, Ayyapanagar, Alfa Garden Kodigehalli, Bangalore-560036. **2). Mrs. Priyanka Gupta, D/o Mr. Brijess Prasad Gupta** HAPPIEST MINDS TECHNOLOGY. Begur Hobli, Doddathogur Village, Electronic City Phase-01, Bangalore-560100 **3). Mrs. Priyanka Gupta D/o Mr. Brijess Prasad Gupta** #7, Vani Shree Nilaya, Devinagar, Lottegollahalli, RMV Cluster Bangalore-560094. **4).Mrs. Priyanka Gupta D/o Mr. Brijess Prasad Gupta**, B-206, **The Green Terraces,** Hulimangala, Anekal, Neo Town Road, Electronic City Phase-01, Bangalore-560100. to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being of **Rs. 50,14,133/- (Rupees Fifty-Lakhs Fourteen Thousand One Hundred and Thirty-Three Only) as on 14.10.2025,** and with interest at contractual rate and expenses thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 & 9 of the said rules, on **23.01.2026**

The Borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the State Bank of India for an amount of **Rs. 51,80,940/- (Rupees Fifty-One Lakhs Eighty Thousand Nine Hundred and Forty Only)** as on 07.01.2026,and interest, + expenses, cost, charges, etc. thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provision of Sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

SCHEDULE "A" PROPERTY
(Description of entire Property)

All that Piece and Parcel of the residential converted land measuring 2 (Two) Acres out of 4 (Four) Acres in Sy. No.155/6 & 155/7, situated at Neotown, Hulimangala village, Jigani Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru Urban District and Bounded as follows: **East:** Land in Sy.No.155, **West:** Land in Sy.No.155, **North:** Balance portion of Sy.No. 155/6 & 155/7 & thereafter 26 Mtrs road & Towns ville **South:** Balance portion of Sy.No. 155/6 & 155/7 & thereafter Village road.

SCHEDULE "B" PROPERTY
(Undivided right, title and interest in schedule" A" Property agreed to be conveyed)

18.86 Sq. Mtrs of undivided right, title and interest and ownership in Schedule 'A' land (which is equivalent to 215 Sq. ft)

SCHEDULE "C" PROPERTY
(Description of the Apartment agreed to be conveyed)

All that pieces and parcel of the residential **Apartment** bearing No. B-206 in Tower-B constructed in Neotown in the Schedule 'A' Property having a carpet area of 60.11 Sq. Mtrs consisting (which is equivalent to 647 Sq.ft) of 2 Bed Rooms, on the 2nd Floor of **"The Green Terraces"** , having E Katha **No.150200102901022977** issued by the Hulimangala Gram Panchayath and bounded as follows: **East by:** Open Space & Site Boundary, **West by:** Flat No B 03, **North by:** Staircase & Flat No B 05, **South by:** Flat No B 07.

Authorized Officer
Place: Bengaluru **STATE BANK OF INDIA**
Date: 23.01.2026 RACPC- II, Koramangala ,BENGALURU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that my client **ROHAN.M,** intent to purchase the Immovable Vacant Property bearing **BDA Site No. 2211,** BDA PID No. 6000043937, formed by Bangalore Development Authority (in Sy. No. 9 AND 10 of K. KRISHNASAGAR VILLAGE) NADAPRABHU KEMPEGOWDA LAYOUT, 5th Block, F Sector, BANGALORE, Measuring East to West: 18.00 Mtrs and North to South: 12.00 Mtrs, in all measuring 216.00 Sq Mtrs, which is more fully described in the Schedule hereunder, from the Vendor **Smt. KUSUMA M.R,** and also has entered into a Sale Agreement dated : 07-01-2026.

Therefore, any Person or Persons, Institutions, Organizations, and Financial Institutions having any manner of right, title, interest, claim or demand in respect of the Schedule Property stated hereunder may file their written objections along with evidentiary proof before the undersigned within **07 days** from the application of this Public Notice failing which my client shall construe that there is no form of Encumbrance or Objection of any sort from anyone to the said Transaction and complete the Sale Transaction free from all encumbrances.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and Parcel of the immovable Vacant Property bearing **BDA Site No. 2211, BDA PID No. 6000043937, formed by the Bangalore Development Authority (in Sy. No. 9 AND 10 of K. KRISHNASAGAR VILLAGE) NADAPRABHU KEMPEGOWDA LAYOUT, 5th Block, F Sector, BANGALORE, Measuring East to West: 18.00 Mtrs and North to South: 12.00 Mtrs, in all measuring 216.00 Sq Mtrs,** bounded as follows: -

East by : Site No. 2125 and 2126,
West by : Road,
North by : Site No. 2212,
South by : Site No. 2210.

D.R MANJUNATH SWAMY, Advocate
Roll No. Kar/2746/02
No. 1019/A, 2nd Main, Service Road,
Vijayanagar, Bangalore-40. M : 9845132585
Bangalore Date : 26-01-2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to notify the public that my client MR.RAJAPPA BALARAJ @ BALARAJ.R, S/o Mr.Rajappa, is intending to purchase the land measuring 10 guntas in Sy.No.7/10, khatha No.2 situated at Kothanur Village, KR Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk which is described in the schedule under from its owners 1) MR.ANNAIAH S/o Late Mr.Chowriraj @ Byrappa, 2) MR.SELVARAJ S/o Mr.Annaiah, 3) MR.BALRAJ S/o Mr.Annaiah Nos. 1 to 3 are residing at No.33, Church Street, Byrathi, Kothanur Post, Bangalore-560077, 4) MRS.ELIZEBETH W/o Late Mr.Ignish, 5) MR.SELVARAJ, S/o Late Mr.Ignish, 6) MR.PHILIPHS S/o Late Mr.Ignish Nos.4 to 6 are residing at No.309/2, Near the King Church, Byrathi, Bangalore North, Bangalore-560077, 7) MRS.JAYA MARY D/o Mr.Chowri Raj W/o Mr.Anthony Raj, 8) MR. PRAJWAL S/o Mrs.Jaya Mary and Mr.Anthony Swamy, 9) MR.AUGUSTIN S/o Mrs.Jaya Mary and Mr.Anthony Swamy, 10) MR.PRATHAP JOYAL S/o Mrs.Jaya Mary and Mr.Anthony Swamy Nos.7 to 10 are Reiding at No. 128, Near Church, Byrathi, Kothanur, Dr. Shivaram Karanth Nagar,Bangalore North, Bangalore-560077, 11) MR.HRUDAYARAJ S/o Mr.Chowri Raj @ Byrappa, 12) MR.NITHIN.H S/o Mr.Hrudayaraj Nos.11 and 12 are residing at No. 165, Near Kristu Rajara Temple Byrathi, Dr.Shivarama Karanth Nagar, Bangalore North, Bangalore 560077, 13) MRS.CHOWRAMMA D/o Mr.Chowri Raj W/o Mr.Selvaraj, 14) MR.JAMES KUMAR S/o Mr.Selvaraj, 15) MR.GEORGE S/o Mr.Selvaraj Nos.13 to 15 are Residing at No.209, Near Church, Byrathi, Kothanur, Dr. Shivaram Karanth Nagar, Bangalore North, Bangalore-560077 and 16) MR.AUGUSTINE KUMAR S/o Mr.Arokia Raj residing at No.22, GC Colony Queens Road, Shivajinagar H.K.P Road, Bangalore-560051 and others. If anybody has any claims over the schedule property or objections to the proposed sale may file their claim or objections to the undersigned in writing with supporting documents within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. If any claim or objections are not received within the stipulated time it will be presumed that there are no claims or objections for transferring the schedule property in favour of my client by way of absolute sale.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the land measuring 10 guntas in Sy.No.7/10, khatha No.2 situated at Kothanur Village, KR Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, bounded on:- East by : property of Annaiah and others, West by : Channel, North by : Property belongs to Yanumakka, South by : Property belongs to Nanjundappa

(N.Guruva Reddy), Advocate
No.34, "Ganesha Krupa", 2nd Floor,
1st Main, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru-09.

Can Fin Homes Ltd
No.964, RR Plaza, First Floor, 2nd Block
BEL Layout, Vidyaranyapura,
Ph.080 35694123, Bangalore-560097
Email Id: vidyaranyapura@canfinhomes.com
CIN: L85110KA1987PLC008699

Can Fin Homes Ltd (Sponsor: Canara Bank)
Vidyaranyapura Branch

APPENDIX- IV-A
[See proviso to rule 8(6)]
Sale notice for sale of immovable property

E- Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

NOTICE is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/ physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd., Vidyaranyapura Branch, will be sold by holding e-auction on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on **02.03.2026**, for recovery of **Rs.32,92,787/-** (Rupees Thirty Two Lakh Ninety Two Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty Seven only) due to Can Fin Homes Ltd. from **Mr.CHANNAIAH B, Mrs.SHOBHA C AND Mrs.PUSHPA B(Borrowers) and Mr.Srinivas.N** (Guarantors), as on **26.01.2026**, together with further interest and other charges thereon.

The reserve price will be **Rs. 37,70,000/-** (Rupees Thirty Seven Lakh Seventy Thousand only) and the earnest money deposit will be **Rs.3,77,000/-** (Rupees Three Lakh Seventy Seven Thousand only)

Description of the Immovable Property

All that piece and parcel of the property bearing at "Chowdeshwari Layout" Site No.24, Formed Out of Property bearing No.56/1, Khatha No.56/1, Situated at NALLASANDRA VILLAGE, Mantapa Grama Panchayathi, Jigani Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Urban District, measuring: East to West: 40 feet, North to South: 20 feet, in all measuring 800 Square feet along with building constructed there on bounded as follows:- East by: Site No.21, West by: Road, North by: Site No.23, South by: Site No.25.

Encumbrance : NIL

The detailed terms and conditions of the sale are provided in the official website of Can Fin Homes Ltd., (https://www.canfinhomes.com/SearchAuction.aspx). Link for participating in e-auction : www.auctionbazaar.com

Sd/-
Date: 26.01.2026 **Authorised Officer**
Place : Bengaluru Can Fin Homes Ltd.

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಇಲಾಖೆ
ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರಿಂಗ್ ವಿಭಾಗ
ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರವರ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಆಕುಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರಿಂಗ್ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಎನ್.ಪಿ.ಸಿ.ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆ ಆವರಣ, ನಜರ್ ಬಾದ್, ಮೈಸೂರು – 10.
(Ph. No: 0821-2979772
E-mail: khsdrp.divmys@gmail.com)
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಆಕುಕ/ಇಂ.ವಿ./ಕಾ.ಅ/ಮೈ/ಸಇ-2/ಟೆಂಡರ್-28/2025-26
ದಿನಾಂಕ: 22.01.2026

ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು, ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರಿಂಗ್ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಮೈಸೂರು ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಗೆ ಒಳಪಡುವ ಕೊಡಗು ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ ಮಡಿಕೇರಿಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಕೊಡಗು ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ವಿಜ್ಞಾನಗಳ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಆವರಣದಲ್ಲಿರುವ 'ಸಿ'ಬ್ಲಾಕ್‌ನ ಪರೀಕ್ಷಾ ಕೊಠಡಿಗೆ Acoustic ಅಳವಡಿಸುವ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಯ (ರೂ.71.84 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳು) ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಯನ್ನು ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಲು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನೊಂದಾಯಿಸಲಾದ ಮೂರನೇ ದರ್ಜೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಮೇಲ್ಪಟ್ಟ ಅರ್ಹ ಸಿವಿಲ್ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆ ವೇಳಾಪಟ್ಟಿ ಮತ್ತು ಇತರೆ ವಿವರಗಳು:-

1. ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಸ್ವೀಕರಿಸುವ ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ: **02.02.2026 ರಂದು 16.00 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ**
2. **ಟೆಂಡರ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ (ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್) : 03.02.2026 ರಂದು 16.30 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ.**

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ವಿದ್ಯುನ್ಮಾನ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಣೆ ವೇದಿಕೆ ಮೂಲಕ **(Through KPPP) https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ದಿಂದ ಡೌನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದು.

ಸೂಚನೆ: 1. ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ಸಹಿ ಮಾಡಿರುವವರು ಯಾವುದೇ ಕಾರಣಗಳನ್ನು ನೀಡದೆ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆಯನ್ನು ಮುಂದೂಡುವ/ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣವಾಗಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ರದ್ದುಗೊಳಿಸುವ / ಟೆಂಡರ್ ನಿರಾಕರಿಸುವ ಹಕ್ಕನ್ನು ಹೊಂದಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ.
2. ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ವ್ಯತ್ಯಾಸವಿದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ದಿನಪತ್ರಿಕೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಅದನ್ನು ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ.ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)** ಮಾತ್ರ ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು.

ಸಹಿ/- ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು,
ಆಕುಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರಿಂಗ್ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಮೈಸೂರು.

DIPR/DDMYS/1558/KSMCA/ 884/2025-26

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The state government is keen on developing tourism across the entire coastal belt, including the islands, with a fresh perspective. This initiative will not only benefit the coastal region, but the approach will open new avenues for the future of the state and the country, said Udupi district in-charge minister Laxmi Hebbalkar

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah attends high tea with Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot at Lok Bhavan in Bengaluru on Sunday | EXPRESS

CONGRESS, OPPN SQUARE OFF ON G RAM G, GUV; PROTESTS TODAY

Lok Bhavan Chalo, Assembly resolution in Congress plans

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

KPCC will organise 'Raj Bhavan Chalo' to protest against the Union government's decision of replacing MGNREGA with VB-G RAM G Act here on Tuesday. "We will organise a protest march and also pass a resolution in the Legislative Assembly against the new Act," DyCM and KPCC president DK Shivakumar told reporters on Monday after unfurling the tricolour in front of the KPCC office. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, AICC General Secretary and Congress in-charge of Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala and others will attend the rally.

On the proposed resolution, Shivakumar said the Congress will seek withdrawal of the VB-G RAM G Act. "Just as black farm laws were repealed, this law too should be withdrawn. Our protest will continue till that happens," he said. He said after the current session, protests will be held in all assembly constituencies, where district in-charge ministers and other leaders of the party will take part. Processions will be part of the protests. Also, protests will be held in the limits of gram panchayats.

"MGNREGA was launched 20 years ago when Congress leader Manmohan Singh was PM. Launched in honour of Mahatma Gandhi, the scheme guaranteed the right to employment to people of rural areas. That right is now being curtailed," he said.

Panchayat members and beneficiaries of the scheme will participate in the protests. "AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi will lead them," he said. Shivakumar sought to know if the Union government provides funds for the scheme. "Let the Centre provide funds. Some leaders from Opposition parties have stated they are ready for a debate in the House. We are fully prepared for it," he said.

On Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot reportedly sending a letter to the President on the incident during his address to the joint session, Shivakumar said the governor did not wait for the national anthem. "It is the governor's constitutional duty to read the address prepared by the state government. Such incidents have happened in states where NDA is not in power," he added.

Earlier, addressing the gathering at the KPCC office, he said some anti-national elements are keen on changing the Constitution. Those in favour of democracy must oppose it. "The Congress government has made it mandatory for schoolchildren to read the preamble of the Constitution," he said.

BJP, JDS intensify call seeking action against Cong leaders

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

TO protest against the ruling Congress legislators allegedly insulting Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, BJP and JDS legislators are staging a demonstration near the Gandhi statue on the premises of Vidhana Soudha on Tuesday morning.

Former minister and BJP MLA S Suresh Kumar questioned the timing of Congress's 'Lok Bhavan Chalo' on Tuesday when the legislature session is under way.

N Ravi Kumar, BJP MLC and Chief Whip of the Opposition in the Council, demanded action against Congress legislators BK Hariprasad, S Ravi and Sharath Bacche Gowda. Some Congress legislators allegedly tried to stop the Governor while he was exiting the assembly hall after delivering a brief address to the joint session of the legislature on Thursday.

"This is not only unacceptable but also condemnable. Our demand is that action should be taken against these Congress legislators," he said. It is unbecoming of the Congress leadership to insult the Constitutional head of the state in the Assembly, he added.

He termed the Congress protest against VB-G RAM G Act as an attempt to cover up irregularities in MGNREGA. "The Congress protest is meaningless and an extravagant exercise in utter futility. The VB-G RAM G Act is people-friendly, fool-proof, transparent and fully accountable," he claimed. He hit out at the police for not arresting Congress MLA Nara Bharath Reddy, who created a ruckus in Ballari a few weeks ago that resulted in the firing by a private gunman and the subsequent death of a Congress worker. The police brushed aside the burning of a model house belonging to former minister Janardhana Reddy. All these incidents point to the failure of Home Minister G Parameshwara, he alleged.

Suresh Kumar asked how appropriate it is for the ruling party to lay siege to the Lok Bhavan. As per the Assembly agenda, the session would start at 10 am on Tuesday, while Congress has called for 'Lok Bhavan Chalo' from Freedom Park at 11 am.

"How appropriate is it for the ruling party to organise such a protest during the session and claim that all its legislators would take part in it," he asked.

Courts have banned protest marches on Bengaluru roads. If the ruling party goes ahead with it, wouldn't it set a precedent for other parties to follow, he asked. How can the ruling party violate the law, he asked.

GOVERNOR SENDS REPORT ON ASSEMBLY IMBROGLIO TO PRESIDENT

Bengaluru: Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot has sent a report to the President of India about developments in the Assembly after his brief address to the joint session of the state legislature on Thursday. Sources said the governor submitted a detailed report regarding the incident in the Assembly and developments prior to that, including suggestions given to the state government to modify the draft speech by removing some paragraphs that contained criticism of the Union government for bringing in the VB-G RAMG Act, and its impact. Sources said the report also mentioned the discussion the governor held with Law Minister HK Patil, Assembly Speaker UT Khader, Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti and others a day before the joint session. The governor also mentioned the incident that took place immediately after his address and the conduct of some Congress members who raised slogans and tried to stop him, sources said. Congress legislators had criticised the governor for not delivering the full address drafted by the state government and instead completing his speech in three sentences, while the opposition BJP and JDS leaders accused the Congress of insulting the governor. The BJP has sought action against Congress legislators who tried to stop the governor. Sources said the governor's report to the president also includes reactions from leaders from various parties after his address to the joint session. ENS

On-the-run Rajeev Gowda arrested from Kerala

V VELAYUDHAM @ Chikkaballapur

CONGRESS leader **Rajeev Gowda**, who was absconding after two separate cases were filed against him at Sidlaghatta police station recently, was arrested from Kerala, sources said on Monday. Chikballapur Superintendent of Police (SP) Kushal Chousksey has confirmed the arrest.

The sources said the Karnataka police team which made the arrest is bringing Gowda to Sidlaghatta, and he is likely to be produced before the court on Wednesday.

Gowda, who contested the 2023 Assembly election from Siddlaghatta on Congress ticket and lost, is accused of threatening Municipal Commissioner Amrutha over phone on January 14 after municipal workers removed unauthorised flex boards installed by his followers. The conversation went viral on social media and sparked protests demanding his arrest. Gowda later posted an apology on social media.

On a complaint by Amrutha, Sidlaghatta police registered a criminal case against Gowda under several BNS Sections, such as use of criminal force agonist a public servant (132), threatening a public servant (224), intentional insult with intent to breach of peace (352), criminal intimidation 351(3) and abetting an offense that carried imprisonment (56).

Later, JDS MLA Ravi Kumar also filed a complaint against Gowda regarding the same incident, leading to the police registering another case against him.

Meanwhile, the High Court of Karnataka has rejected Gowda's plea for quashing the FIRs against him. The Chinthamani district court has also rejected an anticipatory bail application filed by Gowda.

District In-charge Minister Dr MC Sudhakar on Monday condemned the incident and said the police will take action against Gowda. He said the Congress government would not tolerate any act against government officials. The Congress has suspended Gowda from the party and has sought an explanation from him.

State govt to recruit 6,000 teachers for KPS schools, says Bangarappa

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Shivamogga

SCHOOL Education and Literacy Minister Madhu Bangarappa on Monday said that he is all set to submit a proposal to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to recruit 6,000 music, physical education and art teachers exclusively for Karnataka Public Schools (KPS) across the state.

Bangarappa said the recruitment will comprise 2,000 teachers for each subject once he receives the CM's approval. "The government is expediting the recruitment of teachers, especially for Kalyana Karnataka districts," he said.

The minister said the government has sanctioned setting up of 900 KPS units at a cost of Rs 3,500 crore – 3,000 units more than the earlier approval for 500 schools. "The KPS units aim to provide facilities from LKG to Class 12 under one roof. The CM is set to inaugurate the schools in Shivamogga district in February or March," he said, adding that free textbooks and notebooks would be provided to students in all classes from the next academic year.

Bangarappa said the government will also implement the State Education Policy (SEP) soon. Several infrastructure projects are underway in the district, including night landing facilities at the airport, the upgradation of McGann Hospital and construction of a cancer hospital on the Kidwai model, a trauma centre, hi-tech crematorium, dormitory, MCA block and a central library, he said.

The government is fulfilling its promises and empowering people through its five guarantee schemes, while simultaneously pushing development works across the state. "The financial assistance is being provided to beneficiaries without intermediaries, helping build confidence among citizens," he said.

The minister said that the government is taking special interest in resolving long-pending issues of Sharavathi project evacuees and Bagair Hukum cultivators. "A survey, as directed by the Supreme Court, has been completed and the report has been submitted to the court. Efforts are on to provide permanent relief to the affected families," he said.

Praising the students for their Republic Day cultural performances, Bangarappa said the government's initiative of reading the Constitution's Preamble daily in schools has helped increase constitutional awareness among children.

'Bhadra Upper Project will be completed soon'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chitradurga

PLANNING and Statistic and District in-charge Minister D Sudhakar on Monday said he is committed to getting water released from the Upper Bhadra Project up to Gonur lake on an experimental basis by the end of February or March this year.

Speaking after hoisting the Tricolour during the 77th Republic Day programme, he said the government has promised to release Rs 200 crore for pending works of the Rs 2,677-crore project.

He said the tender process for the project that aims to facilitate drip irrigation in 73,946 hectares in Hiriyur, Chitradurga, Holalkere and Challakere taluks has been completed.

Praising farmers of the district, the minister said Chitradurga district has ranked first in the state by producing 48,682 tonnes of foodgrains in 2025-26. He said facilities worth crores of rupees have been provided to thousands of farmers through the horticulture and minor irrigation departments.

The industrial development of the district has been given a boost with the establishment of an industrial corridor near Metikurki in Hiriyur taluk, which will provide more employment to locals. The government has handed over 1,211 acres of land for the Davangere-Tumakuru direct rail line, he said and promised that train services will begin by December 2027.

Peaked caps distributed to cops

The government has replaced slouch hats of police constables with peaked caps. The minister symbolically distributed peaked caps to the district police.

RARE HONOUR

BJP leaders felicitate social worker Susheelamma after the Union government nominated her for the Padma Shri, in Bengaluru on Monday | EXPRESS

Jute sacks hard to come by, millet farmers jittery over delay in purchase

IN THE QUEUE

MSP for ragi - ₹4,886

2.57 lakh farmers registered to sell 60 lakh quintal

MSP for jowar - Rs 3,699, 15,411 farmers registered to sell 8.86 lakh quintal as against the target-30 lakh quintal (registration continued)

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @Bengaluru/Tumakuru

THE delay in the supply of gunny bags has jeopardised the procurement of ragi and jowar crops at minimum support price (MSP), affecting over 2.5 lakh farmers across the state who harvested their crop almost two months ago. Only gunny bags are suitable to pack the millets.

The production of sacks has been hit in Kolkata because of scarcity of jute. The jute industry works in coordination with the Jute Technology Mission of India. Ban on the import of low quality sacks from neighbouring countries, especially Bangladesh, was also one of the factors for the supply disruption, sources said.

The Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Corporation Limited (KFCSCL) has put forth an indent for 1.5 crore sacks and expects the first consignment to arrive by February second week.

The corporation has around 20 lakh bags, but it cannot start the procurement, because once the process starts, it cannot be stopped as it would draw the ire of farmers, an official told TNIE.

"In November, there was a bumper harvest of ragi crop. Any further delay in procurement will result in the exploitation of farmers as they may inevitably sell the produce at low prices in open market. It may also lead to farmers borrowing from money lenders to sustain and prepare for the next sowing season," warned HJ Padmaraju, a farmer from Tovinakere village near Tumakuru. The MSP for ragi at Rs 4,886 per quintal is profitable which is why farmers have been waiting for procurement by the government, he said.

In Tumakuru district alone, 56,991 farmers have registered with KFCSCL to sell 12.95 lakh quintals. District manager of the corporation Tanveer Ali said that indent has been placed for 26 lakh gunny bags.

Sowmya G, Joint Director, Food and Civil Supplies Department, said the procurement, hopefully, will start by the first week of February.

K'TAKA TOUCH

UP Speaker's chair being crafted by state artisans in Mys

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE chair that the Uttar Pradesh Assembly Speaker will sit on will have a distinct Karnataka connection. The new chair is being built from rosewood sourced from Karnataka and carved by skilled artisans from the state.

Interestingly, its design chair closely resembles the chair that the Karnataka Speaker uses. While the Karnataka Speaker's chair has a closed structure and features Gandaberunda and lion emblems, the UP Speaker's chair will have an open design on all sides. Though the main structure of the chair will be similar, it will incorporate some design changes like the UP emblem instead of Karnataka's Gandaberunda.

Karnataka Speaker UT Khader said that his UP counterpart Satish Mahana had earlier visited the Karnataka Legislative Assembly in Bengaluru and admired the Speaker's chair. "Impressed by its design, Mahana expressed interest in having a similar chair made for the UP Assembly. We had got a similar chair done for Suvarna Soudha in Belagavi last year. When I showed him a photograph, he collected the contact details. The work is now being carried out in Mysuru," Khader said.

According to an RTI activist, the chair made for the Suvarna Soudha had cost over Rs 43 lakh.

MLC walks out as min says VB-G RAM G not 'pro-poor'

MLC S V Sankanur walks out of the R-Day function in Gadag on Monday

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Gadag

THE Republic Day function at Gadag on Monday witnessed a commotion when

MLC SV Sankanur walked out mid-way through Law Minister HK Patil's speech, objecting to the latter terming the newly introduced VB-G RAM G scheme as "not pro-poor".

After hoisting the flag, the minister started his speech by speaking about the advantages of MGNREGA and mentioned that its replacement is not pro-poor. Objecting to this, the MLC stood up, saying he does not agree to this, and came up to the minister's podium. Sankanur then told the minister that he will not agree that VB-G RAM G is not pro-poor and walked out of the function, taking the audience by surprise.

"This is a government function and there should be no room for political voices. Terming the VB-G RAM G as not pro-poor will create confusion among the public. Such political comments should not come from a minister who is in a responsible position. We are giving more than MGNREGA and the minister is sending a wrong message to people," he said.

EXPRESS READ

Man throws stone at CM's Economic Adviser Rayareddy

Koppal: A man threw a stone at Chief Minister's Economic Adviser Basavaraj Rayareddy at a public function here on Sunday night, leaving the MLA in slight shock. Luckily, the stone fell in front of Rayareddy and nobody was hurt. The unexpected incident took place in Benakal village of Kushtagi taluk in Koppal district, when Rayareddy was addressing a gathering in the premises of Annadaneshwara Mutt. Villagers and police caught the man who threw the stone, and it was later found that he was mentally ill. However, police began an inquiry into the man's antecedents. ENS

Daily wage labourers working under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) have submitted a memorandum to the Panchayat Development Officer of Irapur Gram Panchayat in Hukkeri taluk, urging the Gram Sabha to unanimously pass a resolution opposing the newly introduced VB-Gram-G Act

(From left) Officers march during the 77th Republic Day celebrations; Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot receives a guard of honour; Students perform a traditional game at Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw Parade Grounds in Bengaluru on Monday | KEVIN NASHON

GUARANTEE SCHEMES HELPING WOMEN: GUV

Says people's purchasing power increased, poor empowered financially, economic and social enthusiasm emerged in women

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

GOVERNOR Thaawarchand Gehlot said on Monday that Bengaluru tops the list of cities in terms of women's safety as per a survey.

Delivering his Republic Day address here, he said under the guarantee schemes of the state government, Rs 1.13 lakh crore has been disbursed to beneficiaries. Surveys indicated that the guarantee schemes introduced by the government, based on the concept of Universal Basic Income, have brought significant changes in the lives of beneficiaries, especially women.

"Studies indicate that people's purchasing power has increased and many poor families have been empowered financially," he said.

"A new economic and social enthusiasm has emerged among women. Surveys indicate that Bengaluru ranks first in the country in terms of women's safety. This is a matter of pride for the state," the Governor said.

Referring to empowerment of women, he said Karnataka has taken some revolutionary decisions, keeping in mind the health and well-being of women workers. "Women workers are now allowed to take menstrual leave for 12 days in a year," he added.

On the progress achieved by the Revenue Department, Gehlot said over 80% of pending cases in revenue courts have been disposed of and 1,11,111 beneficiaries received title deeds. Around one lakh title deeds are ready for distribution. Revenue records are being digitised to protect the interests of farmers. For the convenience of residential site owners, approval has been granted to convert 'B' khatas into 'A' khatas. This will benefit over 20 lakh people in the limits of urban local bodies. The e-Swathu system has helped a large number of people, he said.

The governor said importance is being given to infrastructure development in Bengaluru. Projects worth Rs 1.5 lakh crore are being implemented in the capital city.

On the reforms in the sector of education, he said the recommendations of Prof Sukhadeo Thorat committee are being implemented. 'Akshara Aavishkara' scheme is being implemented in the Kalyan Karnataka region to improve the sector there. A committee chaired by Dr Chhaya Degaonkar to identify the problems the region faced in the sector submitted its report recently.

Stating that excess rainfall had damaged crops in various parts of the state, he said the government has allocated Rs 2,250 crore towards compensation for farmers. Insurance compensation of more that Rs 2,000 crore has been extended to farmers. Farmers now use machines to harvest crops such as ragi, paddy and maize. Assistance is being provided to them under various farm mechanisation schemes. The government has provided over Rs 10,000 crore to farmers in the form of subsidies, he said.

The government has decided to acquire land for the Upper Krishna Project in a single phase and has fixed a fair compensation, he added.

Snacks from prison

Biscuits and cakes made by the inmates of Bengaluru Central Prison were distributed to those who attended the Republic Day function at Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw Parade Ground. The inmates prepare biscuits, cakes and other bakery products as part of HCL Foundation's initiative to teach them life skills.

A student representing Bharata Mata waves the national flag | KEVIN NASHON

A new economic and social enthusiasm has emerged among women. Surveys indicate that Bengaluru ranks first in the country in terms of women's safety. This is a matter of pride for the state Thaawarchand Gehlot, Governor of Karnataka

Unity in diversity is India's strength, says Governor

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

IN his address on Monday, the Governor said framers of the Constitution gave the system of governance to build a strong India through the states.

"The responsibility of preserving this federal structure without weakening it lies with all of us," he said.

He added that the true strength of our republic lies in unity in diversity, the dynamism of democratic institutions, and commitment to the values enshrined in our Constitution.

2 dead after tourist boat capsizes off Udupi beach

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Udupi

TWO individuals have died after a tourist boat carrying 14 passengers capsized in Hangarkatta ship building area, near Delta Beach aka Kodi Bengre Beach in Udupi district on Monday. The tourists were employees of a call centre in Saraswatipuram, Mysuru and a few of them did not wear safety jackets. The incident occurred by 12 pm. The boat had the capacity to accommodate up to 20 people.

All 14 tourists were rescued and shifted to the shore in another boat. Two people identified as Shankarappa (27) from Harave, Chamarajanagar and Sindhu (25) from Mooguru, Chamarajanagar succumbed. Deesha (26) is in critical condition, while Dharmaraja (26) is reported to be out of danger.

Udupi MLA Yashpal Suvarna accused Tourism Department of negligence for the accident. He said many tourist boats operate in violation of norms and without valid licenses, despite repeated public complaints. He said some of them were using forged documents. He criticised the department for focusing on parking fee collection at Malpe beach while neglecting other issues such as cleanliness, safety measures and lifesaving facilities.

Describing the incident as a black mark on Udupi district's tourism sector, Suvarna urged the concerned authorities to implement strict safety measures and prevent recurrence of such incidents.

The tourist boat that capsized on Monday

Sindhu (25)

Shankarappa (27)

EXPRESS READ

Man loses Rs 3.32L in a credit card bonus scam

Mangaluru: A 49-year-old man was allegedly duped of Rs 3.32L by cyber fraudsters, luring him with a fake credit card offer. An unknown caller sent an APK file via WhatsApp and asked him to install it. The fraudster then requested the victim to share his credit card number to deposit the bonus. The caller also asked for OTPs claiming to verify the bonus. On January 16, two transactions of Rs 19,551 each were debited from his ICICI Bank credit card, Rs 2,93,144 from his SBI account between January 16 and 20. On January 20, his wife noticed him sharing OTPs and informed their son. By then, a total of Rs 3,32,247 had been withdrawn. A complaint has been registered at Mangaluru Rural Police Station.

Radio aids Mysuru inmates' mental health

Mysuru: Inmates of Mysuru Central Prison have been successfully running a community radio for the past six years. For the Republic Day programme, inmate RJ Pradeep Kannadiga discussed the importance of constitutional values, and civic responsibility. The radio station operates for about 12 hours within the prison premises from 7am and is run entirely by inmates. "This activity is important for mental well-being. It ensures that inmates remain informed, motivated and emotionally connected," he said. A few of the programmes include newspaper readings, ongoing debates, devotional songs, official announcements, birthday wishes, and songs dedications from family.

Mandya women secure 2nd spot in MGNREGA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Mandya

MANDYA district has secured second place in the state in women's participation under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), now rechristened Viksit Bharat -- Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G), Agriculture Minister N Chaluvarayaswamy said here on Monday.

Addressing the gathering during Republic Day celebrations at Sir M Visvesvaraya Stadium in Mandya, the minister said equality and social justice form the core principles of the Congress government. "In line with economic empowerment, women empowerment, social justice and equality, our government is implementing several pro-people schemes. We have fulfilled our promises by successfully rolling out the ambitious five guarantee schemes," he said.

He said Shakti Yojana has been implemented to empower women. In Mandya district alone, 18.64 crore free travel tickets were issued to women at a cost of Rs 511 crore. Under Anna Bhagya Yojana, 10kg rice and other foodgrains are being distributed to every BPL and Antyodaya card holder, benefiting 4,30,208 people. Under the Gruha Jyoti Yojana, 5,02,889 consumers have registered, and by the end of December, Rs 278.48crore was disbursed towards the free electricity scheme.

B'luru teen Srishti wins Jr ITF World Tennis Tour, 4th in a row

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

13-year-old tennis star **Srishti Kiran** from Bengaluru claimed her fourth consecutive ITF junior singles title on Sunday at ITF junior circuit. She won in the singles category at the ITF World Tennis Tour Juniors J30 tournament held in Huamantla (Mexico) during January 19–25, registering 21 wins on her way to the top. In singles category, Kiran sustained pressure on Natalie Tsatsalashvili from Canada to win the tournament in straight sets of 6-4, 6-1. Her journey to the title included a tough semifinal against Natalia Elena Martinez from USA where the game went to three sets – 7-5, 1-6, 7-5 – with Kiran emerging victorious.

Kiran shone in the doubles category as well. She partnered with Mexico's Tamara Herman and finished as the runners-up.

Daily wage worker loses house, earnings in fire accident

Madikeri: An accidental fire burnt down the house of a daily wager in Somwarpet limits. The fire accident was reported in Kajuru village during the wee hours on Monday. The victim's family is in distress following the incident. Pushpa, an elderly woman, is a daily wage worker who lives with her grandson at a tiny house in Kajuru. Pushpa works as an estate labourer, and she receives a weekly salary. Vinod, a neighbour who is also the president of Aiguru GP, rescued Pushpa's grandson, Harshith. However, the entire house was burnt down in a few minutes. ENS

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to notify the public that as per the instructions of my clients (1) Mr.Gopal Reddy.V, S/o Late Mr.Venkataramanaappa, (2) Mrs.Sheela, W/o Mr.Gopal Reddy.V, (3) Ms.Vandana.G, D/o Mr.Gopal Reddy.V and (4) Ms.Varsha.G, D/o Mr.Gopal Reddy.V, all are residents of Ramasagara Village, Chandapura Post, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore District, Bangalore-560099, I hereby notify the public that my clients and one Mr.Srinivas Reddy.R.V. and his wife Mrs.Lakshmamma and their daughter Ms.Chaitanya.S had entered into a joint development agreement dated 11-11-2021 registered as document No.ANK-1-01473-2022-23, stored in CD No.ANKD1291 on 16-05-2022 in the Office of Senior Sub-Registrar, Anekal with M/s SHREE SAMPADHA GROUP, a partnership firm, represented by its Partner Mr.K.Suresh S/o Mr.K.Ramakrishna to develop the land measuring 02 acres 16 guntas in Sy.No.126/1 of Ramasagara Village, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore District in terms and conditions mentioned therein. On the same day, they had also executed a general power of attorney which is registered as document No.ANK-4-00083-2022-23, stored in CD No.ANKD1291 on 16-05-2022 in the Office of Senior Sub-Registrar, Anekal authorising said M/s Shree Sampadha Group, a partnership firm, represented by its Partner Mr.K.Suresh to act as per the terms mentioned therein. The said M/s Shree Sampadha Group has not acted in terms of the above said registered joint development agreement. Further, by utilising the above said registered general power of attorney, said Mr.K.Suresh, the partner of M/s Shree Sampadha Group is trying to create third party interest in respect of the schedule property. Further, said Mr.K.Suresh in collusion with Dharni Capital Services Ltd., represented by Mr.Amit Mohta has fraudulently entered into agreement of sale dated 08-12-2025 registered as document No.SRJ-1-07559/2025-26 electronically stored in Central Database on 09-12-2025 in the Office of Sub-Registrar, Basavanagudi (Sarjapura) by showing fictitious site numbers without the consent or knowledge of my clients. That after coming to know of the above said fraudulent acts, my clients have cancelled the above said registered joint development agreement and also revoked the powers given under the above said general power of attorney by causing a legal notice dated 13-01-2026 to them through speed post. In view of cancellation of joint development agreement and revocation of the said power of attorney, the said M/S Shree Sampadha Group, represented by its Partner, Mr.K.Suresh ceased to hold any authorization from my clients and he has no power to represent my clients in any manner in respect of the schedule property.

THEREFORE, the public are hereby notified and warned that not to enter into any transaction with M/s Shree Sampadha Group, a partnership firm, represented by its partner Mr.K.Suresh in respect of the schedule mentioned below. Despite this notice, if any person or persons proceeds to transact with said M/s Shree Sampadha Group, a partnership firm, represented by its partner Mr.K.Suresh he/she/they will be doing so at their own risk and peril and my clients will not be responsible for any transactions in respect of the schedule property herein or any portion thereof.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the land measuring 02 acres 16 guntas in Sy.No.126/1 of Ramasagara Village, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore District, bounded on:

East by : Property bearing Sy.No.31/4
West by : Property bearing Sy.No.127
North by : Property bearing Sy.No.123/1
South by : Property bearing Sy.No.126/3

N.GURUVA REDDY, Advocate
No. 34, Ganesha Krupa, 2nd Floor, 1st Main, Gandhinagar, Bangalore-560 009.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I R. Mahendravarma practicing Advocate and now I issuing public notice on behalf of my clientCanara Bank Sultanpalya Branch, Bangalore - 560032andone Mr. P. Badmanaban, Mrs. D. Umadevi and Mr. Sharon Padmanabhan have approached Canara Bank to avail loan before Canara bank with deposit of original title documents out of same the sale deed bearing document No.2948/2016-17 and same document duly registered before sub-registrar Jayanagar Bangalore also deposited or not before Canara Bank but now same sale deed not traceable in original title deeds before said parties or in Canara Bank and after searching of same documents in Bank records not find till today, hence my client declare that the same document has been misplaced and same document is not traceable hence my client requesting that and any person finding the same original above document or any person having any claim on same document and in any manner should write to the undersigned with documentary proof in support of your claim within **07 days** of issuances of this notice, failing which my client will proceed on the basis that there are no claims on same documents

Sd/- **R.Mahendravarma** Advocate,
No.42, R.G.Nagar, M.S.Playa,
Bangalore-560097, Moile No.7795488467.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Client **Mr.P. Sreedhar Reddy,** aged about 63 years, S/o Late P.Venku Reddy, R./a No.25, 1st Main, HGH Layout, Ganganagar, Bangalore-560032, is the sole and absolute owner of immovable property being agricultural land bearing Sy.No.118, measuring 2 Acres 33 Guntas, situated at Doddabanahalli village, Bidarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore presently Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore having acquired the same in terms of Sale deed dated 20-07-2022 from Smt.Deeba Nihal, vide which is duly registered as Document No.INR-1-04972/2022-23, Book-I, Stored in C.D. No.INRD1126, in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Shivajinagar (Indiranagar), Bangalore.

My client while travelling from Ganganagar to R.T.Nagar for taking Xerox on 25-01-2026 at 10.30 am have lost the file containing the following Original documents:-

a. Darkhast Order No.SC-477/66-67, dated 11-07-1966, issued by the Tahsildar, Hoskote Taluk in favour of Sri.Narayan Singh in respect of Sy.No.3, measuring 2 Acres 33 Guntas, situated at Doddabanahalli Village, Hoskote Taluk, Bangalore District.

b.Sale deed dated 16-08-1984 executed by Papa Bai-wife of Late Narayan Singh, Bhavani Singh-son of Late Narayan Singh, N.Balaji Singh- son of Late Narayan Singh in favour of Sri.G.Kempanna, which is duly registered as Document No.1135/1984-85, Book-I, volume 1690, pages 95-97, in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Hoskote.

c. Sale deed dated 23-10-1993 executed by Sri.G.Kempanna in favour of Smt.Deeba Nihal, which is duly registered as Document No.2091/93-94, Book-I, volume 697, pages 219-227, registered on 26-10-1993, in the office of the Senior Sub-Registrar, Krishnarajapura, Bangalore.

And hence lodged Police complaint at R.T.Nagar Police Station, Bangalore, dated 25-1-2026, vide Lost Report No.2026891/2026

If any person/s find the above said original documents, may kindly be handed over to the address of the Advocate mentioned below.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of immovable property being agricultural land bearing Sy.No.118, measuring 2 Acres 33 Guntas, situated at Doddabanahalli village, Bidarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore presently Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore and bounded by:

On the East : Government Horticultural Department Land;

On the West : Road and Land belonging to Narayanaswamy and Venkatachari;

On the North : Government Kunte (Channel) ;

On the South : Land bearing Sy.No.3.

(ABDUL KHADIR) Advocate
No.205, 2nd Floor, 9th Cross, HMT Layout, V.V. Nagar, R.T. Nagar Post, Bangalore -560032 (M) 937-9999899, E-mail-khadir47@rediffmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

I R. Mahendravarma practicing Advocate and now I issuing public notice on behalf of my client Smt. V. Jayalakshmi D/o. Late. Venkatappa, residing at No.14, 1st Block, Hesaraghatta Village, Bangalore North Taluk and she has lost Hakkupathra dated 13.04.1981 pertains to property bearing No.17 formed out of Sy.No.297 and situated at Hesaraghatta Village with measuring about 40×30 feet and any person finding the original above document or any person having any claim on same document and in any manner should write to the undersigned with documentary proof in support of your claim within **07 days** of issuances of this notice, failing which my client will proceed on the basis that there are no claims on same documents.

Sd/- **R.Mahendravarma** Advocate,
No.42, R.G.Nagar, M.S.Playa,
Bangalore-560097, Moile No.7795488467.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client **M/s JAI SHELTERS** is registered Partnership firm are being in business of Land development & Real estate & in respect of the schedule property they have entered in the registered JDA dated 18.10.2024 to develop the same apartment complex with owners and the said project named as **JAI KINGSLAND** and the owners of schedule property have maintained valid title over the same & having two old title deeds which have been laminated due to ignorance as follows:

a) Sale deed dated 19.11.1982 registered as document no.3399/1985-86 in the office of Sub-registrar Bangalore South taluk,

b) Sale deed dated 19.04.1949 registered as document no.6416/1948-49 in the office of Sub-registrar Bangalore taluk,

My client **M/s JAI SHELTERS** approached various Banks for project approvals including SBI Bank and My client represents that the said laminated documents are genuine & original as claimed by the owners of the schedule property.

Any person/s, individuals, financial institutions or body corporate whosoever having any claims, interest, or charge, etc., in whatsoever manner over the schedule property herein are hereby called upon to lodge their claims or objections, if any, with supporting documents thereon with the undersigned in person within **fifteen (15) days** from the date of publication of this general public notice, failing which my clients will presume that the schedule property herein is free from all sorts of encumbrance of whatsoever nature and proceed to complete the transactions.

COMPOSITE SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the immoveable property bearing portion of converted New Sy.No.55/2, Old Sy.No.55 and portion of converted New Sy.No.56/4, Old Sy.No.56 (portion converted from Apartment-Residential purpose vide conversion order bearing No. No.ALN/EKHW/SR/67/2022-23 and ALN/EKHW/SR/68/2022-23, dated 10.04.2023, issued by the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Bangalore) situated at **Sadaramangala Village, K.R.Puram Hobli, earlier Bangalore South Taluk presently Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore** measuring 3 Acre 22 guntas out of 4 acres 07 guntas plus 05 guntas of Karab with all rights, appurtenances what so ever hereunder or underneath or above the surface and bounded as follows:

East by: Remaining portion of same Sy.No.55/2 & 56/4 belongs to owners; West by: Property bearing Sy No.56/3 and Private Property; North by : Property bearing Sy No.55/1; South by : Road and Property bearing Sy No.56/2.

Sd/- Mrs. ANCHAL WAHID
ADVOCATE
Office at No.21/1, Ground Floor, 5th Street, Bangalore-560 002
Mobile : 97384036465

JANA SMALL FINANCE BANK (A Scheduled Commercial Bank) | **Registered Office:** The Fairway, Ground & First Floor, Survey No.10/1, 11/2 &12/2B, Off Domlur, Koramangala Inner Ring Road, Next to EGL Business Park, Challaghatta, Bangalore-560071.

E-AUCTION NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR SALE THROUGH E-AUCTION UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT (SARFAESI ACT) 2002, READ WITH PROVISO RULE 8(6) & 9 OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES 2002.

The undersigned as authorised officer of **Jana Small Finance Bank Limited** has **taken possession** of the following property in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(4) of the SARFAESI ACT. The Borrower in particular and public at large are informed that online auction (e-auction)of the mortgage property in the below mentioned account for realisation of dues of the Bank will be held on **"AS IS WHERE IS BASIS "** and **"AS IS WHAT IS BASIS"** on the date as prescribed as here under.

Sr. No.	Loan Account Number	Name of Original Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor	Date of 13-2 Notice	Date of Possession	Present Outstanding balance as on 22.01.2026	Date & Time of Inspection of the property	Reserve Price in INR	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) in INR	Date and Time of E-Auction	Last Date Time & Place for submission of Bid
1	47040430001054	1) Mr. Shankarachari, 2) Mrs. Kempamma	22.04.2025	25.06.2025	Rs.7,53,492.10 (Rupees SevenLakh Fifty Three Thousand Four Hundred Ninety Two and Ten Paisa Only)	07.02.2026 Time: 09:30 AM to 05:00 PM	Rs.9,53,000/- (Rupees Nine Lakh Fifty Three Thousand Only)	Rs.95,300/- (Rupees Ninety Five Thousand Three Hundred Only)	13.02.2026 @ 02:00 PM	12.02.2026, Till 5.00 PM Jana Small Finance Bank Ltd., The Fairway, Ground & First Floor, Survey No.10/1, 11/2 & 12/2B, Off Domlur, Koramangla Inner Ring Road, Next to EGL Business Park, Challaghatta, Bangalore-560071
	Details of Secured Assets: All that piece and parcel of the Property No.152900200500600635 Klhaneshwari No.42/42, Measuring East to West 9.146 Meter and North to South 12.195 Meter, situated at Bhoohalli Village, Kadahalli Gram Panchayath, Sathanur Hobali, Kanakapura Block, Ramanagar District and **Bounded on: East by:** House belongs to Rathnamma, **West by:** Property belongs to Lingegowda, **North by:** Road, **South by:** House belongs to Eregowda.									
2	31889630000610	1) Mrs. Shiba, 2) Mr. Mahesh Srinivas	11.03.2025	26.05.2025	Rs.5,59,150.20 (Rupees Five Lakh Fifty Nine Thousand One Hundred Fifty and Twenty Paisa Only)	07.02.2026 Time: 09:30 AM to 05:00 PM	Rs.22,38,000/- (Rupees Twenty Two Lakh Thirty Eight Thousand Only)	Rs.2,23,800/- (Rupees Two Lakh Twenty Three Thousand Eight Hundred Only)	13.02.2026 @ 02:00 PM	12.02.2026, Till 5.00 PM Jana Small Finance Bank Ltd., The Fairway, Ground & First Floor, Survey No.10/1, 11/2 & 12/2B, Off Domlur, Koramangla Inner Ring Road, Next to EGL Business Park, Challaghatta, Bangalore-560071
	Details of Secured Assets: All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Corporation No.84, (PID No.92-125-84), situated at A.K.Colony, J.C Nagar, (MunireddyPalya), Ward No.92, Bangalore and **Bounded on: East by:** Road, **West by:** Property belongs to Smt. Gangubayamma, **North by:** Property belongs to Sri Annayyappa, **South by:** Temple. Measuring East to West: 25 Feet and North to South: 17 Feet, totally 350 Sq.ft, along with RCC Building thereon.									

The properties are being held on **"AS IS WHERE IS BASIS"** & **"AS IS WHAT IS BASIS"** and the E-Auction will be conducted **'On Line'.** The auction will be conducted through the Bank's approved service provider **M/s. 4 Closure** at the web portal **https://bankauctions.in** & **www.foreclosureindia.com.** For more information and For details, help, procedure and online training on e-auction, prospective bidders may contact **M/s. 4 Closure; Contact Mr. Varun B Contact Number: 8142000809. Email id: info@bankauctions.in/ Karnataka@bankauctions.in..**

For further details on terms and conditions to take part in e-auction proceedings and any for any query relating to property please contact **Jana Small Finance Bank authorized officers Mr. Ranjan Naik (Mob. No.6362951653).** To the best of knowledge and information of the Authorised Officer, there are no encumbrances on the properties. However the intending bidders should make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of property put on prior to submitting their bid. No conditional bid will be accepted. This is also a notice to the above named Borrowers/ Guarantor's/ Mortgagors about e-auction scheduled for the mortgaged properties. The Borrower/ Guarantor/ Mortgagor are hereby notified to pay the sum as mentioned above along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of auction, failing which the property will be sold and balance dues if any will be recovered with interest and cost.

Date: 27.02.2026, Place: Bangalore Rural **Sd/- Authorized Officer, Jana Small Finance Bank Limited**

QuoteExpress

YOU CAN'T WAIT FOR INSPIRATION. YOU HAVE TO GO AFTER IT WITH A CLUB

JACK LONDON

Political fight should be limited to the election period, and at all other times, the focus must be solely on development, said Udupi District In-charge Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar. The minister said she has never indulged in politics when it came to development and will continue to prioritise only development work

POWER STORAGE

Copper price rise triggers search for alternatives

Battery experts at KREDL rue govt's tardy pace, say no immediate solution in sight

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

WITH the price of silver rising sharply and copper gradually following the trend, researchers and experts at the incubation centre of the Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Limited (KREDL) are now looking for affordable alternatives for use in batteries.

"Silver was the ideal precious metal to be used, and its alternatives were copper and aluminum. But they have all become very expensive. Lithium, an imported metal, is also becoming expensive and scarce with the rise in demand for electric vehicle batteries. So now there is a need to look for affordable alternative resources. This has now brought us back to square one in finding solutions for having battery-enabled power storage," said a KREDL official.

> **Silver was the ideal precious metal to be used, and its alternatives were copper and aluminum. But they have all become very expensive**
>
> A KREDL official

Sources in the incubation centre said that with the pace at which the state government is looking for solutions, chances are bleak that it would make any headway in the next two years, and by the time a solution is found, it may become redundant.

The KREDL is now working to involve startups and innovation experts in Karnataka to partner with them in finding alternative metals that can be used for battery storage.

"We are creating a road map where we will work with and support the startups in their innovations. The financial models, however, are yet to be worked upon," sources in the incubation centre said.

The researchers are also seeking solutions from experts in leading institutes such as the Indian Institute of Science and Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore and other leading educational institutions in the country.

"China has been the leader in battery storage. They also hold a monopoly in using silver. But they are also finding it very expensive and are looking for alternatives. India will have to beat China if it wants to be Atma Nirbhar Bharat. Karnataka needs to take the lead and work quickly," said Dr MH Swaminath, the chairman of KREDL Incubation Centre expert committee.

Swaminath, however, said there have been very few instances where states have surpassed the demand in power generation, requiring storage facilities. Still the government needs to find affordable, easy and quick solutions for storing power. The options currently under consideration are expensive and hence, not viable, he said.

Gutkha ads on state-run buses spark protests

INDRA S @ Bengaluru

BENGALURU Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) buses have been wrapped in advertisements that indirectly promote gutkha and chewing tobacco that are claimed and advertised as 'elaichi'. "After the ban on gutkha ad, companies are making a mockery of the law", said S J Chander, Convener of the Consortium for Tobacco Free Karnataka.

These ads have triggered a fresh public debate in Bengaluru on surrogate advertising promoting gutkha and chewing tobacco that are already rampantand. BMTC officials have maintained that the corporation does not permit tobacco advertising. "These advertisements are of elaichi, not pan masala. We don't allow tobacco or similar product advertisements on our buses," an official said.

A BMTC bus displaying a gutkha ad plies in Bengaluru on Monday | VINOD KUMAR T

Public health experts argue that such branding plays on long-standing associations. "This has been going on since 2011" said Chander, pointing out that pan masala and tobacco are commonly sold in two sachets at the same shops, "Everyone knows people buy them together, to make gutkha. Only the packaging has changed, not the practice."

Chander argued that advertising 'kesar' is a psychological trick. "Why would anyone spend crores to promote kesar? People don't buy kesar after seeing the ad, they buy gutkha."

Dr Thriveni B S, a Public Health Specialist said, "This is being projected as cardamom or as flavoured mouth freshener. Despite letters from the Health Department, such ads continue on buses and have now expanded to entire bus wraps, likely for higher revenue. Officers must be sensitive and protect public interest and health by stopping indirect promotion of harmful tobacco products."

Y G Muralidharan, founder of the Consumer Rights Education and Awareness Trust (CREAT) and public health activist, said the issue goes beyond one brand. "The real problem is weak enforcement. Complaints are made, fines are collected, and the very next day sales resume," he said, adding that surrogate advertising has become rampant despite disclaimers.

Expers said the human cost is borne by the poorest like daily-wage workers and other labourers. Oral cancer leads to one of the most painful deaths, said Muralidharan and also highlighted the public spitting and health concerns that follow.

With viral videos showing citizens tearing such ads off KSRTC buses, the controversy reflects a growing public demand that public transport spaces not be used, even indirectly, to normalise products proven to harm health.

A letter from health department to KSRTC and BMTC dated 04/05/2023 clearly states that advertisements of tobacco and pan masala products of brands like Vimal, Cool Lip and RMD should be refrained on buses. Direct and indirect advertising of tobacco products is a violation of Section 5 of the COTPA and World Health Organisation's FCTC Article 5.3.

BEATING THE CHILL

People enjoy roasted corn amidst a light drizzle at Cubbon Park in Bengaluru on Monday. Parts of Bengaluru received light drizzle throughout Monday and the weather continued to remain cold in the city | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

Won't stand misleading youth, says Gundu Rao

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mangaluru

DISTRICT in-charge minister Dinesh Gundu Rao warned that the government would not tolerate any individual or organisation attempting to mislead local youth for personal gain or incite them into violence.

He delivered the Republic Day speech after unfurling the national flag at Nehru Maidan, Mangaluru, on Monday.

The minister strongly condemned the scrapping of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), which guaranteed employment for the poor. He termed the replaced act as anti-poor, anti-labour, and unconstitutional, adding that it shifts power from panchayats and states to the central government.

The minister highlighted that special task forces comprising trained police officers have been set up in sensitive areas to monitor conflicts, unlawful activities, hate speech, and the spreading of false or provocative messages on social media. These measures have significantly contributed to maintaining peace and order in the district. He added that divisive forces have been an obstacle to development, and the government's efforts to improve law and order have laid the foundation for the district's all-round progress.

Mangaluru District In-charge Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao receives the guard of honour on Monday | EXPRESS

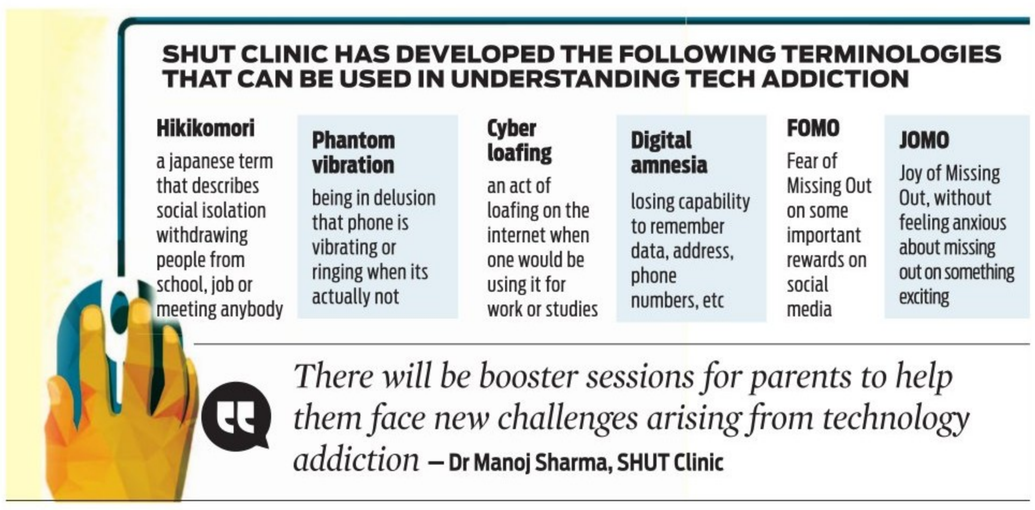
Gundu Rao called upon everyone to respect the true values of their own religions while showing mutual respect for other faiths. If peace and harmony prevail in society, the district will develop, and the standard of living of the people will improve, he said.

NIMHANS' ONLINE SESSION ON TECH ADDICTION A HIT

RASHMI PATIL @ Bengaluru

IN order to address the addiction to mobile phones and social media increasing widely among schoolchildren, the Nimhans' Service for Healthy Use of Technology (SHUT) Clinic is organising an online training session for parents every Saturday. Named Parent Group for Management of Technology Addiction (PGMTA), the session has attracted more than 5,500 parents since its launch in July 2025.

Dr Manoj Sharma, who heads the SHUT Clinic, said, "Before conducting each online session, we announce it on various social media platforms including X, Facebook and Instagram. Every week, the session gets on an average 300 registrations from parents across India who hail from various social and economic backgrounds. However, we restrict it to 50–60 people for each session so that each parent's question can be addressed using various case studies we have seen so far."


SHUT CLINIC HAS DEVELOPED THE FOLLOWING TERMINOLOGIES THAT CAN BE USED IN UNDERSTANDING TECH ADDICTION
Hikikomori
a japanese term that describes social isolation withdrawing people from school, job or meeting anybody
Phantom vibration
being in delusion that phone is vibrating or ringing when its actually not
Cyber loafing
an act of loafing on the internet when one would be using it for work or studies
Digital amnesia
losing capability to remember data, address, phone numbers, etc
FOMO
Fear of Missing Out on some important rewards on social media
JOMO
Joy of Missing Out, without feeling anxious about missing out on something exciting
There will be booster sessions for parents to help them face new challenges arising from technology addiction — Dr Manoj Sharma, SHUT Clinic

About the problems that parents face in helping their children overcome technology addiction, Sharma said, "The main issue is convincing children about the importance of limited use of mobile phones and social media. They are in constant fear that children will take their advice wrongly and resort to serious steps like self-harm, start lying to them and even become aggressive and irritated. The resistance has also led to serious fights in some families, forcing them to approach psychologists and therapists for counselling."

Another concern for parents is children's addiction to gaming and, in some cases, pornography. "Most of the cases that I have come across have parents complaining that their adolescent children are glued to their mobile screen for nearly 10 hours. This often leads to poor communication with parents and siblings, lack of interest in physical activities and poor awareness about what is happening around them. Students neither excel academically nor have long term goals because of this," Dr Sharma said.

Focus areas

The online sessions for parents focus on three areas – cyber literacy to enhance parents' knowledge about privacy settings, preventing data leak and protection from cyber threats; helping parents develop healthy communication with children and resolution of conflicts. "One cannot build or develop these skills in a single session. Parents must make notes during the sessions. They have to practice it every day and attend sessions again so that it helps them strengthen their skills. There will be booster sessions for parents to help them face new challenges arising from technology addiction. We also run a helpline every Friday to provide support," Dr Sharma said.

EXPRESS READ

Swachha Vahini driver hoists flag at Joshi's office

Hubballi: The 77th Republic Day was celebrated in a distinct and inspiring manner at the office of Union Minister Pralhad Joshi in Hubballi, with a woman driver of the Swachha Vahini initiative hoisting the national flag. Kallavva Gali from Beluru Gram Panchayat, who hoisted the flag, said, "Today, residents actively support their work, even calling to ensure timely waste collection." She expressed gratitude to Joshi for recognising women from the margins of society and giving them the honour of hoisting the national flag. Hubballi-Dharwad Central MLA Mahesh Tenginkai said it was a privilege to celebrate the occasion in rural areas with Swachha Vahini women drivers hoisting the flag. Addressing the gathering virtually from New Delhi, Joshi praised the women for their contribution to public cleanliness and health. He noted that many of them, despite backgrounds as agricultural labourers, have embraced responsibility with pride. While gaining employment has brought financial security, driving Swachha Vahini vehicles instilled in them a sense of ownership toward village cleanliness. He highlighted the National Rural Livelihood Mission launched under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, emphasising that these women are living examples of rural empowerment and self-reliance. ENS

SWR posts ₹6,930 cr gross revenue

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hubballi

THE South Western Railway (SWR) has achieved a gross revenue of Rs 6,939 crore, with passenger revenue amounting to Rs 2,543 crore, and freight revenue standing at Rs 3,976 crore, and met the passenger demand during festival seasons by operating 481 special trains and attaching 614 extra coaches, and generated an additional Rs 232 crore in revenue.

Speaking after unfurling the National Flag during the Republic Day celebration, SWR general manager Mukul Saran Mathur said that the railway zone has emerged as the top-performing Zonal Railway in incremental originating freight loading and revenue, achieving 38 million tonnes of freight with 18.5 per cent growth, and recording its highest-ever monthly loading of 5.1 million tonnes and Rs 502 crore freight revenue in December 2025.

Stating that the Hubballi Division has also set a new record with 3.8 million tonnes of monthly loading, registering 31 per cent growth in December, the general manager said, during April-December, the SWR made significant progress in capacity augmentation and infrastructure development, commissioning 26 km of doubling works, and securing sanction for major doubling projects including Ballari-Chikjajur and Toranagallu-Ranjithpura.

SWR GM Mukul Saran Mathur inspects the guard of honour during R-Day celebration in Hubballi on Monday

He also said that operational efficiency improved through speed enhancements, with sectional speed raised to 110 kmph over 360 track kilometres, loop line speed increased to 30 kmph, and Hassan-Mangaluru section speed enhanced to 80 kmph (except ghat section). A total of 20 Permanent Speed Restrictions (PSR) were removed and 21 PSRs were relaxed and fencing on high-speed routes and upgradation of 240 km of track to 25-tonne axle load.

Electrification and energy efficiency witnessed strong momentum with the commissioning of four traction substations and electrification of 207 track kilometres, taking the total electrified network to 3,340 route kilometres, which is nearly 90% of the total RKM of the zone, Mathur said and added that electric traction was extended to 163 pairs of trains, 48 electric locomotives were commissioned raising the fleet to 326, and 30 pairs of trains were converted from diesel to electric traction, resulting in fuel savings of about Rs 39 crore.

Mentioning that the operational performance of the SWR remained robust with 90 per cent, he said, punctuality in mail and express trains, secured 4th rank at the all-India level.

Bedthi–Varada project is fight for life: Bommai

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Haveri

THE Bedthi–Varada river interlinking project is a matter of survival and future security for the people of the region, and the struggle for it is a fight for life itself, BJP MP and former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai has said, clarifying that the movement is not against any individual or state.

Speaking at a meeting of religious heads, political leaders, and representatives of various organisations here at Hukkeri Mutt on Monday, Bommai said the question of water ownership was not limited to one district but concerns the entire world. "Nature provides water freely, and humanity must learn to share it responsibly. While wars have been fought for power, future conflicts will be over water, making its conservation and equitable distribution critical", he added.

Bommai noted that India has moved from a water-secure "green zone" to a "red zone" in recent decades. Recognising this challenge, former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee initiated the concept of interlinking rivers, proposing connections between major rivers such as the Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna, and Cauvery. In South India alone, interlinking the Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna, and Cauvery rivers could yield 500-1,000 TMC of water, of which Karnataka is estimated to receive about 44 TMC.

BJP MP and former CM Basavaraj Bommai speaks at Hukkeri Mutt on Monday

He emphasised that the Bedthi-Varada-Dharma river interlinking is an intra-state project and does not involve inter-state disputes. The project proposes barrages instead of dams, lift irrigation from outside river basins, and minimal environmental impact. Any land affected can be compensated through alternative arrangements, while technical experts will address issues through the Detailed Project Report (DPR).

Stating that the Union government has already approved the project in principle, and an MoU has been signed to prepare the DPR, the MP said that efforts toward this project have been ongoing for nearly 25 years. Bommai stressed the need for widespread public awareness before DPR finalisation to ensure Haveri district receives its rightful share of water.

Calling it a people's movement led by farmers and supported by religious leaders, he said the project would benefit not only river basin areas but also towns such as Hangal, Shiggaon, Savanur, Ranebennur, and parts of Gadag district.

Delegation to meet CM, DCM, Union minister

Interacting with media persons, Bommai said a delegation led by Sadasiva Swamiji of Hukkeri Mutt in Haveri would meet Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar to explain the need for the Bedthi–Varada river interlinking project. He added that the delegation would also meet the Union Minister for Jal Shakti C R Patil and ministers representing the state at the Centre to press their case. Bommai said that legislators, MPs, religious heads, and leaders of farmers' organisations would be part of the delegation to persuade them to implement the Bedthi–Varada river interlinking project.

The BJD has slammed the Odisha government over the alleged plight of farmers and deteriorating law and order situation, and decided to launch a fortnight-long statewide agitation. They will hold demonstrations in every district from February 2 to 17 and a rally in Bhubaneswar on February 24

Jallikattu SOPs, insurance rule for tamers dropped

Online registration not necessary for bulls in local events: TN govt

B ANBUSELVAN @ Chennai

THE Tamil Nadu government has amended the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for conducting jallikattu by relaxing the mandatory insurance requirement for bull tamers, following demands from the event organisers. The government has also announced a few other relaxations in the SOPs for jallikattu and erudhu vidum vizha.

According to a government order dated January 23, issued by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sciences following an announcement made by Chief Minister MK Stalin two weeks ago, bull tamers participate in the event voluntarily, and organisers are no longer required to provide insurance for them. The revenue department will also not insist on affidavits for providing bank guarantees. Additionally, online registration for bulls and tamers will no longer be mandatory for local participants, the G.O. stated.

Earlier, organisers were required to provide an insurance coverage of ₹5 lakh per person against death or permanent disability for bull tamers and spectators. Coverage had to be arranged for at least 20 persons, capped at ₹1 crore per event. If insurance could not be obtained due to high premium cost, organisers were required to submit a bank guarantee of ₹20 lakh along with an affidavit on stamp paper, providing coverage of ₹5 lakh per person for a minimum of four persons.

However, a section of bull tamers had opposed this mandatory insurance provision, stating that the events are conducted voluntarily without any commercial benefit, and that arranging such large sums significantly increases expenses. Organisers also faced difficulties as insurance companies were reluctant to provide coverage to bull tamers, who are classified as high-risk participants.

The approval for jallikattu, eruthu vidum vizha, and manju virattu events is granted through the http://jallikattu.tn.gov.in/ portal and is permitted to be conducted between January 1 and May 31.

Elephant carcass cut into 32 pieces, buried to evade dept action

AGENCIES @ Berhampur

THE carcass of a wild elephant, which died of suspected electrocution, was cut into 32 pieces and buried in different places in Odisha's Kandhamal and Kalahandi districts, a senior forest officer said on Monday.

According to officials, to avoid departmental action following the death of a wild elephant in the Baliguda forest division in Kandhamal district, forest officers disposed of the body without any intimation or approval of higher authority.

Preliminary inquiry has revealed that the carcass was cut into 32 pieces for easy shifting. Forest officials have recovered the pieces from two places, Tahansir and Jhiripani in Kalahandi and Kandhamal districts, respectively, said Regional Chief Conservator of Forests (RCCF), Berhampur, Vishwanath Neelannavar.

A wildlife offence case has been registered against Binay Kumar Bishi, deputy ranger and the in-charge ranger of Belghar, and others. Bishi has been put under suspension. However, he is absconding. The RCCF said the investigating officer in the case has also issued notices to eight members of the anti-poaching squad, ordering them not to leave headquarters and to appear before the investigating officer at the time of need. The incident came to light after the Divisional Forest Officer Baliguda Ghanashyam Mahant directed ACF to conduct an inquiry about rumours about the death of an elephant and the shifting of its carcass secretly on January 14. The ACF had stated that it was a rumour. However, the DFO had again entrusted another ACF, Baliguda Manoranjan Bagha, to conduct an inquiry after the local sarapanch, Sanjukta Mallick, complained about the death of the elephant on January 17.

CULTURAL EXTRAVAGANZA

Students perform a folk dance during the 77th Republic Day celebrations at Labour Statue, Chennai on Monday | EXPRESS

Summer may be harsh, but water scarcity unlikely

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

THOUGH the summer could be harsh, the state may not face any shortage of water as it received copious rain last monsoon. Adequate water in canals will ensure uninterrupted farming activity, experts said. "The state has received good rainfall and dams are full. We may not experience the situation similar to 2023, which was a drought year. We will have sufficient drinking water. However, in some pockets where underground water is severely exploited, we may face issues in those specific hoblis and panchayats," officials said. Last summer, as the temperatures hit 37 degrees Celsius in many parts of the state, the government had issued a heat wave alert.

EXPRESS READ

Woman killed by husband in Tamil Nadu

Virudhunagar: A 57-year-old woman was allegedly killed by her husband following a dispute in an inebriated state near Sivakasi on Sunday night. The deceased, Thangavelammal, was employed at a fireworks unit. Her husband, Jeganathan (60), a construction worker, was allegedly an alcoholic and often quarrelled with her. The couple got into a heated argument after Joseph returned home drunk and allegedly assaulted his wife, leaving her dead at the spot. Later, relatives alerted the Sivakasi East police, who recovered the body, and sent it to the Sivakasi Government Hospital for autopsy.

B Tech student booked for raping teenage girl

Tirupati: A 21-year-old B Tech student, Veera Yeshwanth, a native of Badvel in Kadapa district and currently studying in Chittoor, allegedly raped a 19-year-old girl at a homestay in Tirupati on Saturday. According to the police, the victim, a resident of Tirupati rural, was working as a beautician in the city. She came into contact with the accused through Instagram a few days ago. The accused allegedly asked her to meet him at the homestay. Police said that the accused sexually assaulted the girl in the room and later threatened to kill her if she disclosed the incident to anyone.

Manja claims life of 5-year-old in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: A five-year-old girl died here on Monday allegedly after a kite string entangled around her neck and slit her throat, while she was seated on a two-wheeler driven by her father here, police said. According to police, a man along with his family members visited nearby Khazipally village on Monday and while returning home on his motorcycle, his younger daughter, who was seated in the front, suddenly started shouting in pain. The man found that a 'manja' (kite) thread was entangled around her neck, police said. She succumbed to her injuries while undergoing treatment, police said.

THIRUPARANKUNDRAM ROW

Plea in SC against HC order allowing lighting of lamp

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court challenging the Madras High Court's January 6 judgment, subjecting the lighting of the Karthigai Deepam at the Thiruparankundram hilltop only after clearance from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the police.

In his plea, Ravikumar, the original petitioner, has challenged the HC's directive as an unlawful dilution of binding civil court decrees recognising the Arulmigu Subramania Swamy Temple's ownership and control of the hill, and as an impermissible judicial intrusion into an essential religious practice.

Ravikumar contended that although the HC acknowledged the temple's right to light the Deepam at the Deepathoon, it rendered that right conditional by subjecting it to administrative discretion.

He contended that the HC exceeded its jurisdiction by imposing fresh restrictions. "The decisions concerning where

and by whom the Deepam is lit fall within the temple's internal religious management and denominational autonomy, protected under Article 26 of the Constitution, and cannot be made subject to statutory authorities in the absence of a clear legislative mandate," Ravikumar said.

On January 23, the top court sought a response from the Centre, the Tamil Nadu government and others on a separate plea seeking directions on the ASI's takeover of the Thiruparankundram temple and daily lamp lighting on top of the 'Deepathoon', following a petition filed by Hindu Dharma Parishad.

The Parishad has sought the apex court's direction that on the day of Karthigai, the entire Thirupparankundram Hill should be lit with lamps and devotees of Muruga be allowed to worship. On January 6, a division bench of the Madras High Court had made it clear that the spot on which the stone pillar is located belongs to the Sri Subramania Swamy Temple.

On December 1 last year, a single bench of the HC had allowed petitioner Rama Ravikumar to light the Karthigai Deepam on the 'Deepathoon'. The TN government went on appeal, in which the division bench gave its ruling on January 6.

'Floodlights pose safety risk at HAL Airport'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

STRONG lights and lasers have been known to affect the visibility of pilots while taking off and landing. Runways do have lights that are critical for safe operations and are called precision approach path indicator (PAPI) lights. They guide pilots to the correct glide slope for landing. The presence of other lights – especially in low-visibility conditions – can distract them.

"The HAL Airport is in the middle of the town. Floodlights can haze out PAPI lights and pilots have previously confused the Old Airport Road for a runway as well. Runway 09 at HAL Airport is prone to this. The floodlights can be disorienting for pilots," said Captain Arvind Sharma, a former commercial pilot. In February 14, 1990, the pilots of an Indian Airlines Airbus A320-231 misjudged their glide slope, and crashed short of the runway on KGA grounds. Itkilled 92 of 146 people on board, including the two pilots.

200 more stray dogs killed in TG village

AGENCIES @ Hyderabad

In yet another incident of alleged stray dogs killing in Telangana, about 200 canines were killed in Hanamkonda district, taking the toll to 1,100 in the state since December 2025, animal rights activists claimed.

An animal welfare activist, A Goutham, in a complaint lodged with police on Monday, stated that 200 stray dogs were brutally killed about one month ago in Pathipaka village of Shayampet mandal by administering poisonous injections allegedly on the orders of the Gram Panchayat Secretary.

Goutham, who works as Cruelty Prevention Manager, associated with the Stray Animal Foundation of India (NGO), said after getting information in this regard, he, along with other animal welfare activists, visited the village and enquired with a few villagers regarding the mass killing of stray dogs, and they stated about the Gram Panchayat Secretary's alleged involvement in the killings.

The carcasses of the dogs were then buried in a graveyard, the complainant said, and sought registration of an FIR.

A police official at Shayampet Police Station said they have included the latest complaint with an FIR already registered by them in connection with the alleged killing of around 300 stray dogs in Shayampet and Arepally villages in Hanamkonda district. Earlier, nine persons, including two women sarpanches and their husbands, were booked over the killings.

'FALSE PROPAGANDA'

Stalin denies Modi's claim, says TN safest state for women in country

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Thanjavur

Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin waves at a crowd during the 'Vellum Tamil Pengal' conference in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, Monday | x

Refuting recent negative remarks made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding women's safety in the state and dismissing his claims as false propaganda, Chief Minister M K Stalin on Monday said that the safest state for women in India has been Tamil Nadu.

"This (Tamil Nadu) is the state in which highest number of women are working (in industries)," said Stalin, who was speaking at the DMK's women wing's Vellum Tamil Pengal Maanadu of delta zone at Sengipatti in Thanjavur district.

Accusing AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami of forming the alliance (with the BJP) to safeguard himself from legal cases (by central agencies), Stalin said that every one knows the BJP-AIADMK alliance "is a blackmail alliance" formed through threats and "thrust upon by Union Home Minister Amit Shah", against the wishes of real AIADMK cadre. "All those in that (NDA) alliance were in some way trapped by the BJP through ED, I-T or CBI and were expecting 'that washing machine' would free them (from charges)," Stalin said. Dismissing the PM's claims at an NDA rally in Mathuranthakam a few days ago as false propaganda, Stalin quoted a recent report by a consulting firm on the survey of Top Cities for Women in India, which has placed seven cities of Tamil Nadu (for women security, health, and education) in top 25 (safest cities) among the 125 cities in the country.

SIT summons ex-MP Santosh in tapgate probe

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the alleged phone-tapping case on Monday served a notice to BRS leader and former Rajya Sabha member Joginapally Santosh Kumar, summoning him to appear before it at 3 pm on Tuesday.

Santosh is the nephew of BRS president and former chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao. The notice was issued under Section 160 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Santosh said he would appear before the SIT. The SIT had earlier examined BRS working president KT Rama Rao and former minister T Harish Rao in connection with the probe.

According to the notice, the investigation into the case, registered on March 10, 2024, at Panjagutta police station, indicated that Santosh Rao was acquainted with certain facts and circumstances related to the matter.

"Hence, you are requested to appear in person before the undersigned for examination for the purpose of further investigation upon receipt of this notice at 3 pm on Tuesday at the Jubilee Hills ACP office," the notice stated. The case pertains to allegations that during the BRS regime, phones of politicians, journalists, judges and others were tapped. BRS leader and MLC Sravan Dasoju described the SIT notice as a display of political malice.

NATURE SHIELD

'GREAT GREEN WALL' SET TO FORTIFY NORTH ANDHRA COASTLINE

USHA PERI @ Visakhapatnam

WITH rising climate risks and repeated exposure to cyclones, storm surges and coastal erosion, the State government has begun the structured implementation of the Great Green Wall Project along the coast as a long-term coastal protection initiative. The programme, launched under the leadership of Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan, is also being implemented in the Visakhapatnam Circle, which comprises the coastal districts of Visakhapatnam, Anakapalle, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam.

The project is designed to strengthen natural coastal defences while safeguarding communities, livelihoods, infrastructure and fragile ecosystems. Rather than being a single plantation drive, it is structured as an integrated green barrier system combining shelter-belt plantations, mangrove restoration, sand dune stabilisation and community forestry into a continuous coastal protection framework.

Chief Conservator of Forests of Visakhapatnam Circle, BM Diwan Mydeen, said the project is being implemented as a long-term ecological security system for the coastline.

"Activities planned under the programme include the expansion of casuarina shelter-belts, palmyrah dibbling, coconut plantations, regeneration of mangrove forests, strengthening of sand reaches with sand-binding species, block plantations in vacant lands using fast-growing species, avenue plantations along coastal roads, and community plantations on government lands using wind-breaking species," he explained. He added that the phased model aims to create a continuous, legally protected green belt along the coast, integrating disaster risk reduction, environmental conservation and community participation into a unified coastal planning framework.

Activities planned under the initiative include casuarina shelter-belts expansion, palmyrah dibbling, coconut plantations, regeneration of mangrove forests — BM Diwan Mydeen, Chief Conservator of Forests

EDITORIAL

"The most interesting people you'll find are ones that don't fit into your average cardboard box. They'll make what they need, they'll make their own boxes

Temple Grandin

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

CIVILIAN HONOURS: CONTINUITY WITH A WIDER EMBRACE

AT a time of deep political polarisation, India's civilian honours have quietly emerged as a rare space of continuity and consensus. The Padma awards and the Bharat Ratna, often scrutinised for political signalling, have in recent years shown a discernible effort to rise above partisan divides, even as they have expanded their social and regional reach.

The honours list has cut across ideological lines, recognising leaders from rival political traditions for their public contributions. This year's posthumous Padma Bhushans for former Jharkhand Chief Minister Shibu Soren and Padma Vibhushan for Left veteran V S Achuthanandan underline that trend. Earlier, Mulayam Singh Yadav was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 2023, while Ghulam Nabi Azad and Tarun Gogoi received the Padma Bhushan. Leaders such as Sharad Pawar, P A Sangma, S C Jamir and Tokheho Sema have also figured on the list, even as CPI(M) leader Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee chose to decline the honour. The 2019 Bharat Ratna for Pranab Mukherjee alongside Nanaji Deshmukh and Bhupen Hazarika reinforced this bipartisan arc. That approach reached a symbolic high in 2024, when five Bharat Ratnas were announced. The selection—Karpoori Thakur, L K Advani, P V Narasimha Rao, Chaudhary Charan Singh and M S Swaminathan—spanned ideologies, eras and professions.

Yet, the more consequential shift has unfolded at the grassroots level. The Padma Shri, in particular, has undergone a quiet democratisation. Recent lists have foregrounded unsung heroes who are social workers, doctors, artists and educators from remote regions, many drawn from Dalit, tribal and backward communities. From Anke Gowda, a former bus conductor who built one of the world's largest free-access libraries, to Tulasi Gowda, a Halakki community member revered for her encyclopaedic knowledge of plants; from the Godbole couple delivering healthcare in conflict-hit Bastar to professionals working with the disabled and burn victims, the idea of merit has been widened.

This dual emphasis on recognising towering public figures as well as individuals whose impact is felt far from the national spotlight has, over time, added to the Padma awards' sheen. Any honours system invites hard scrutiny and disagreement over the political nature of choices often spills into the public domain. But India's recent selections indicate an effort to broaden the idea of merit through greater inclusion, regional representation and social diversity. In this sense, the Padma awards are beginning to reflect a more layered understanding of national service.

GEOPOLITICAL SHADOW ON CRICKET BAD FOR SPORT

THERE is no doubt that sport today has become more politicised than ever before. If the Paris Olympics in 2024 became one of the most geopolitically-charged games, the T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka from February 7 is turning into a regional slugfest. Bangladesh's decision to not travel to India made sporting drama out of the souring relationship between the neighbours.

The Bangladesh women's team did travel to India near the end of 2025, when diplomatic disagreements were already playing out. But the issue of Mustafizur Rahman, picked by Kolkata Knight Riders before being asked by the Board of Control for Cricket in India to drop him over 'recent developments', exposed cricket's inextricable, worrying link with subcontinental politics. That the BCCI is yet to offer a proper explanation for Rahman's ouster—despite the IPL allowing Bangladeshi players at the auction—beggars belief. The answers may not be forthcoming. While Bangladesh opted to pull out when their demand to play elsewhere was not met, the fallout was brutal.—Scotland were brought in in their stead.

With the International Cricket Council headed by Jay Shah, former BCCI secretary, this was not an unexpected outcome. The ICC did arrange a few meetings to convince the Bangladesh Cricket Board, but to no avail. A sad reality of the time we live is that Bangladesh's lack of commercial leverage—millions of fans, but little sponsorship support—also went against them. There are multiple reasons for the ICC decision, but BCCI's financial clout is the foremost. Meanwhile, the Asia bloc within the ICC—that former BCCI president Jagmohan Dalmiya had built along with Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh—has become redundant.

With Pakistan spewing cricketing hostilities on and off the field, and now Bangladesh grumbling about unfairness, the lopsidedness of cricketing power in the subcontinent is made even more apparent. This is not a forward stride for the sport of cricket. At a time when other sports are continuously seeking newer pastures for growth, cricket is continuing to look in, gatekeeping at the say-so of a few elite nations.

QUICK TAKE

A BRIDGE TOO FAR

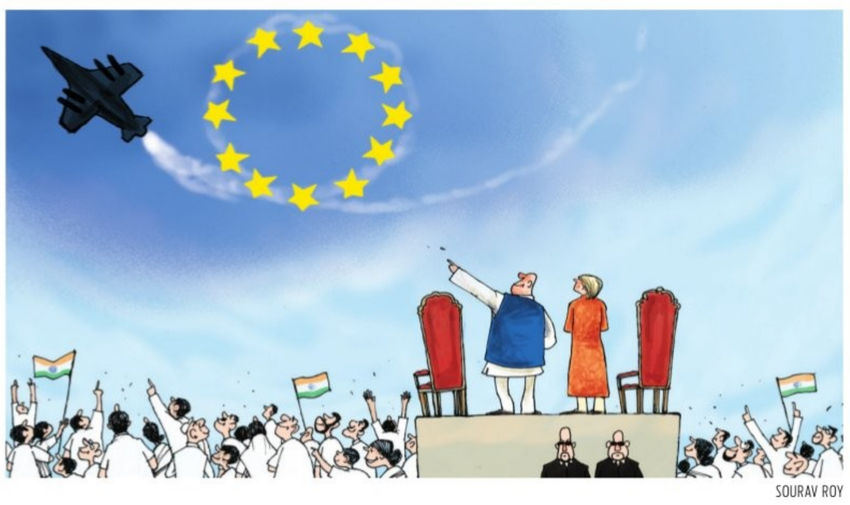
ONE would think that a country perennially facing infrastructure inadequacy would treasure what it has built. But years of crumbling bridges and potholed roads have belied the hope that we can ensure such care for precious new constructions. But when a 60-foot, 30-tonne iron bridge gets 'stolen' overnight, we must admit that our sense of looking after public goods is glaringly absent. This is true for the administration, which in Chhattisgarh's Korba could not ensure the bridge's safety or the quick capture of the culprits, as well as the public, who could not stay vigilant enough to stop the theft of the 40-year-old structure that was meticulously dismantled and carted off. If the value of common goods is not inculcated at an early age, individual greed will always be able to hoodwink the law.

India and EU are coming closer because of imperatives on both sides. The collective weight of India's relations with individual European countries may be more than that with the bloc

CONVERGENCE BY NECESSITY, NOT CONVENIENCE

LT GEN SYED ATA HASNAIN (RETD)

Former Commander, Srinagar-based 15 Corps; Chancellor, Central University of Kashmir



SOURAV ROY

AT a time when the international system is marked by flux, ambiguity and shifting alignments—when yesterday's partners appear transactional and today's adversaries selectively cooperative—the coming together of India and the European Union carries particular significance. The convergence of two mature political systems, each accustomed to strategic restraint and long-term calculation, is not incidental.

That the EU leadership has been invited as a collective to India's Republic Day—an invitation New Delhi extends with deliberate care—signals a mutual recognition that stability, reliability and strategic autonomy are emerging as valued currencies in an uncertain world. The leaders' presence should be read less as ceremonial symbolism and more as a reflection of converging strategic compulsions. This convergence is not driven by ideological alignment or historical intimacy, but by necessity—economic, geopolitical and systemic—on both sides.

India today operates in a far more fragmented global environment than even a decade ago. Its strategic engagements across regions remain active, but increasingly constrained by competing priorities and structural limits. Russia continues to be significant for India, not as an ideological partner, but as a critical defence supplier and a long-standing balancer in the China equation. Even as India diversifies defence procurement, the depth and legacy of this relationship cannot be wished away without incurring strategic risk.

West Asia, meanwhile, presents a different complexity. India has successfully built parallel relationships with competing regional actors—Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar. This balancing act has served Indian interests well, but it also limits the scope for deeper strategic alignment with any single regional bloc. West Asia is an arena of engagement, not anchorage, and it's changing at a dynamic speed. The challenge thrown up by the issue regarding the Gaza Board of Peace exemplifies the type of complex choices India faces.

In the Indo-Pacific, the picture is subtly changing. While the region remains central to India's maritime and economic interests, the US itself appears to be recalibrating its threat perception, particularly with regard to China. Strategic signalling has softened, emphasis has shifted toward risk management rather than confrontation, and the urgency that once amplified India's strategic value in this theatre has somewhat diluted. India remains important—but less indispensable than before.

It is against this backdrop that Europe acquires renewed relevance.

For India, the EU represents a rare strategic space where cooperation is possible without intense competition or coercive alignment. The EU is not seeking military alliances in Asia, nor is it attempting to draw India into zero-sum geopolitical contests. Its interests lie primarily in economic security, technological resilience, supply chain diversification, climate transitions and rule-based stability—all areas where India's rise complements European needs.

From Europe's perspective, the attraction is equally pragmatic. The EU today faces a prolonged security crisis in its eastern neighbourhood, uncertainty about the long-term reliability of American security guarantees, and an uncomfortable dependence on China across critical economic sectors. India offers Europe scale, market depth, skilled manpower, democratic legitimacy and strategic autonomy—without the unpredictability that increasingly characterises other major powers.

This makes India-EU convergence fundamentally different from India's engagements elsewhere. It is non-adversarial, non-hierarchical and structurally compatible. That said, the relationship cannot be understood purely through the EU as a monolithic entity. Individual European countries—France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands among them—enjoy deep, mature and often highly productive bilateral relationships with India. In defence, energy, technology, education and innovation, these ties have advanced far more rapidly than India's engagement with EU institutions.

This creates a paradox. The cumulative weight of India's bilateral relationships with European states is often heavier than its engagement with the EU as a single institutionalised system. These national relationships bring speed, flexibility and political trust—qualities that Brussels-led mechanisms may sometimes lack. Any serious India-EU strategic partnership must therefore acknowledge that the whole does not automatically exceed the sum of its parts.

The challenge—and opportunity—for India lies in leveraging strong bilateral ties to shape a coherent engagement with the EU without allowing institutional inertia or normative overreach to dilute outcomes. Europe's regulatory instincts on trade, climate, data and labour will continue to create friction with India's developmental imperatives. These differences are structural and should not be disguised. Strategic partnership does not require uniformity of worldview; a broad convergence can allow the process to progress. A broad understanding of mutual recognition of constraints and complementarities remains very helpful.

The EU's stance on Gaza closely mirrors India's own cautious approach. Both support humanitarian stabilisation and reconstruction, yet remain wary of *ad hoc* mechanisms that risk diluting multilateral legitimacy. In distancing themselves from the proposed Peace Board while backing broader relief, India and the EU demonstrate a shared instinct: commitment to outcomes without compromising institutional credibility.

Economically, convergence is already visible. Europe seeks trusted manufacturing partners, resilient supply chains, and alternatives to excessive China dependence. India seeks technology, investment, and market access to sustain growth and industrial transformation. Negotiations on the Trade and Investment Agreement, though complex, must be viewed as a strategic economic exercise rather than just a narrow commercial bargain.

Politically, both sides share an interest in preserving strategic autonomy in an increasingly polarised world. Neither India nor the EU is comfortable with rigid blocs or binary choices. This shared discomfort may yet prove to be the strongest foundation for the partnership.

The Republic Day visit, therefore, is best understood not as a culmination, but as a way point. It signals Europe's recognition of emerging India as a stabilising global actor, and India's willingness to engage Europe as a strategic entity. The convergence stands out precisely because it offers cooperation without compulsion. That, in today's strategic environment, is no small advantage. *(Views are personal)*

(atahasnain@gmail.com)

CAN AI HELP INDIA BREATHE EASIER?

PRAVIN KAUSHAL

Founder of RaastaFix and member of Government Liaison Task Force at IIT Kharagpur who is working on scalable solutions to solve India's air pollution

AIR pollution in India is not only a cause for episodic panic; it is a systemic failure whose costs are staggering—in lost lives, lost productivity, rising healthcare expenditure and irreversible damage to children's cognitive development. And despite decades of regulation, monitoring stations and court orders, the outcomes remain grim.

The uncomfortable truth is that we are trying to solve a 21st-century problem with 20th-century tools. This is where artificial intelligence-led technology can offer India not a miracle cure, but something far more valuable—governance intelligence at scale.

India's pollution control architecture suffers from three structural weaknesses. First, data poverty masquerading as data abundance. Most cities rely on a handful of regulatory-grade monitoring stations to represent millions of people. These stations are sparse and often provide averages that hide hyperlocal realities. Pollution does not distribute evenly. A school near a traffic junction, a construction site or an industrial boundary may experience pollution levels several times higher than a city-wide average.

Second, reactive enforcement. Action is triggered only after pollution crosses thresholds. By the time bans are imposed, the damage is already done. Pollution control boards act like post-mortem examiners rather than preventive physicians.

Third, institutional silos. Transport departments do not speak to health departments; urban local bodies lack real-time feedback loops; citizens remain passive recipients of advisories rather than active participants in solutions.

AI-led systems directly address all three failures. Hyperlocal sensing using low-cost, calibrated sensors allows pollution to be mapped at street, ward and neighbourhood levels—sometimes down to a few hundred metres. When combined with AI-driven calibration, sensor fusion and anomaly detection, these networks can achieve accuracy that is decision-grade, not merely indicative.

But sensing alone is insufficient. The real leap comes from predictive intelligence. AI models trained on historical pollution data, weather patterns, traffic flows, industrial activity and land-use changes can forecast pollution spikes days in advance. This allows city administrators to act before air quality deteriorates—rerouting traffic, rescheduling construction, modifying industrial operations or issuing targeted health advisories.

One of the least discussed advantages of AI is its ability to depoliticise enforcement. When pollution hotspots are algorithmically identified, violations can no longer hide behind averages or excuses. Construction sites exceeding dust thresholds, industries breaching emission norms, or roads generating abnormal particulate levels become visible in real time.

X.COM

Artificial intelligence can fill gaps in anti-pollution efforts by providing predictive tools and corrective mechanisms. Trained on Indian data, AI-enabled systems can provide hyperlocal and national environmental intelligence. The tech exists, but political will is needed to stitch it together at scale

AI-enabled dashboards can automatically trigger inspections, fines, or corrective actions—reducing discretion, delay and rent-seeking. Over time, this creates a culture where compliance is cheaper than violation.

For municipal bodies struggling with manpower constraints, this is critical. AI does not replace officials; it amplifies their reach.

Air pollution is not only a regulatory problem; it is a civic one. AI-led platforms can democratise access to environmental intelligence. Citizens can receive personalised exposure advisories based on local air quality, and even get route suggestions based on cleaner air pathways. Parents can make informed decisions about outdoor activities for children; patients with respiratory illnesses can plan their day with precision.

More importantly, citizens can become sensors and stakeholders, not just sufferers. Crowdsourced data, grievance reporting, and behavioral nudges—powered by AI—create feedback loops that strengthen governance rather than weaken it. This is where technology meets trust.

The biggest gains from AI-led pollution control may lie outside the environment department. Health systems can anticipate spikes in respiratory admissions. Schools can adjust schedules proactively. Employers can redesign work hours during high-exposure periods. Insurers can price risk more accurately and incentivise preventive behaviour.

Cleaner air is not a luxury—it is a productivity multiplier. Even marginal reductions in pollution translate into billions saved in healthcare costs and lost workdays. AI enables these cross-sector linkages by acting as a shared intelligence layer across government.

India does not lack pilots; it lacks platforms. Across the country, innovative pollution-tech solutions exist—some built by startups, some by academic institutions, some by civic entrepreneurs. But they remain fragmented, localised and often dependent on individual champions. What India needs is a national environmental intelligence backbone—interoperable, open and scalable—where states, cities and agencies plug in. Just as digital public infrastructure transformed payments and identity, environmental intelligence must become a public good.

Crucially, this system must be Indian by design—trained on Indian data, adapted to Indian urban forms and governed by Indian institutions. Outsourcing our environmental intelligence would be as dangerous as outsourcing our defence intelligence.

AI cannot substitute hard decisions on urban planning, energy transition or public transport. But it can remove excuses and make inaction a choice. *(Views are personal)*

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Responsible journalism

Ref: *Aadhaar-less pregnant Telangana woman's endless search for hospital care* (Jan 24). This newspaper's report on the plight of Ubidi Rekha, a pregnant 23-year-old, was timely. It prompted the CM's office to intervene, and led the Government General Hospital to assure treatment and care for childbirth. I laud the newspaper for its impactful and responsible journalism.
Anand Mohan, Hyderabad

Dikshitar's diversity

Ref: *Shankarabharanam's grace* (Jan 26). Muthuswamy Dikshitar had also composed *Nottu Swaras* in raag Shankarabharanam based on Western compositions, using the C Major scale. The compositions were influenced by military band music Dikshitar had heard during the colonial days. An 'English Note' in this raag was popularised by the legendary Madurai Mani Iyer.
N Rama Rao, email

Chronicler's passing

Ref: *Tully, who saw India grow as a nation, dies at 90* (Jan 26). In Mark Tully's death, we have lost an erudite and passionate writer, perhaps one of the last few of the past generation. He wrote extensively on India in a pure chronicler's style that deeply touched the Indian conscience.
Sanath Kumar T S, Thrissur

Next Nobel

Ref: *Trumpism triumphs multilateralism* (Jan 25). Donald Trump has a quixotic habit of imposing tariffs on countries as if he is the monarch of all he surveys. It remains to be seen whether he will impose tariff on Norway or sanction the Norwegian Nobel Committee if the next Peace Prize is not awarded to him.
C G Kuriakose, Kothamangalam

UPSC help

Ref: *Budget 2026 must Trump-proof India's economy* (Jan 25). As an UPSC interview candidate, I found the suggestions in the article new and inspiring. It will help me in my preparation. So I wanted to convey my sincere thanks for the amazing article.
Monishka K, email

Individual values

Ref: *Mumbai professor killed at platform for trivial argument* (Jan 26). While the administrative lacunae need filling, it is also crucial to introspect as humans on our plummeting values. Playing blame games only leads to denial. Real solutions must begin at the individual level.
Anwesha, Bhadrak

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Chairman of the Board: **Manoj Kumar Sonthalia** Editor: **Santwana Bhattacharya**

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POSTS OF THE DAY

Rajnath Singh @rajnathsingh
In every democratic system, the social and economic upliftment of citizens is one of the government's most important responsibilities.

Shashi Tharoor @ShashiTharoor
Great to be amongst the first speakers at the only International think tank in Dubai – which happens to be from India!

Piyush Goyal @PiyushGoyal
On the occasion of Republic Day, I had the privilege today of hoisting the Tricolour at my residence. The Tricolour reminds us of our rights as well as our duties

'Strengthen culture of discussion & dialogue, not disruption'

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla says planned interruptions in Parliament harm democracy, cause loss of legislative business and go against people's interests

LOK Sabha Speaker **Om Birla** has expressed serious concern over the declining number of sittings in State legislatures and the erosion of the parliamentary tradition of discussion and dialogue. He tells **Rajesh Kumar Thakur** in an exclusive interview that the role of the legislature is crucial in the realisation of the national goal of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047. **Excerpts**:

In several Indian States, sittings of Legislative Assemblies are getting reduced to just a few days. How do you view this?
Yes, it is a matter of grave concern. A minimum of 30 sittings per year should be ensured in State legislatures so that they become an effective platform for expressing the people's aspirations. The more the House functions, the more meaningful, serious and result-oriented discussions will be possible, which are beneficial for a parliamentary democracy.

I appeal to all political parties to ensure at least 30 sittings in a year. The government should also ensure legislative business for at least 30 sittings. A resolution on this issue was also adopted at the 86th All India Presiding Officers' Conference in Lucknow.

The Budget Session is beginning on January 28.

What is your appeal to political parties for the smooth conduct of proceedings?
Every lawmaker should understand that continuous and planned disruptions in the House are not appropriate for the country's democracy. When disruptions occur or are deliberately planned during a session by any political party, it results in a significant loss of legislative business, and ultimately, the sufferers are the people who vote and elect their representatives to Parliament. We must strengthen the culture of discussion and dialogue, not disruption.

I appeal to leaders and members of all political parties to cooperate in ensuring the smooth functioning of the House. In a democracy, the people are supreme, and our accountability to the public is not limited to elections but extends every day and in every moment.

It has been observed that many lawmakers arrive late and leave after merely registering their attendance in the register kept outside the House chamber. Is there any plan to ensure their presence during sessions?
Yes, this practice is likely to end with the introduction of registering attendance through allotted consoles installed at members' earmarked seats in the House. From the Budget Session onwards, MPs will have to register their attendance during the session by taking their seats and marking their presence with thumb impressions.

Verbatim

However, such lawmakers are very few, and an increasing number of MPs have recorded 100 per cent attendance in previous sessions. Nevertheless, we have decided to ensure that MPs mark their attendance through digital consoles installed at their designated seats in the Lok Sabha. Attendance will be counted only when MPs are seated in the House.

This move is aimed at increasing transparency and accountability in parliamentary proceedings. It will also reflect actual participation in House proceedings rather than mere presence within the Parliament premises. Those who arrive after adjournment, due to disruption or any other reason, will be treated as absent.

What measures are being taken to update the functioning of Parliament in view of the growing use of AI-enabled technologies and others?
We will start work in the coming days to ensure real-time translation from regional languages using AI-enabled tools. From this Budget Session, MPs will be able to speak in 22 regional languages. We are testing AI for real-time translation, and within three to four months, it is expected to reach full operational status.

Parliamentary proceedings have already gone digital, and AI usage is currently under trial. This requires extensive monitoring and caution, but we are working to ensure the accurate delivery of AI-based services following multiple rounds of testing. At present, AI is being used on a trial basis to translate speeches, and the translations are later verified. So far, accuracy has been around 80 percent, and efforts are underway to improve it to 100 percent with the assistance of IT companies.

It is our endeavour to make translation completely AI-driven from the Monsoon Session this year. This will ensure that details of proceedings are uploaded to the website within half an hour, rather than the several hours it currently takes. AI will also be used for research purposes in a paperless House.

How are State Assemblies progressing on such initiatives?
It is encouraging to note that all Assemblies are now paperless. Proceedings of many Assemblies are being live-streamed on YouTube, and by the end of this year, all Assemblies will be fully digitised. Through digitisation, we are working to ensure that people can view live proceedings of any State Assembly or Parliament using technology in the near future.

What do you have to say on the rights of Speakers?
The rights of Speakers have been discussed from time to time, including during the All India Presiding Officers' Conference on this occasion and earlier ones. I believe the Speaker's powers should not be unlimited to ensure neutrality and transparency in the House.

What is the status of the committee report on the impeachment brought against Justice Yashwant Verma?
The committee's report is awaited. Once submitted, we will move forward accordingly.

Recently, you chaired the Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth from January 14 to 16, and you have now attended the All India Presiding Officers' Conference in Lucknow. How successful were these conferences in achieving their objectives?
The Indian Parliament hosted the CSPOC at the Samvidhan Sadan, and it met all its objectives, including discussions on parliamentary democracy. India has been an active participant in this forum and has hosted it four times so far — in 1970–71, 1986, 2010 and now in 2026. The next CSPOC is scheduled for 2028 in London. The CSPOC in Delhi witnessed wide-ranging deliberations on key agendas, including leveraging technology in parliamentary functioning. The occasion reflected India's rich parliamentary traditions, democratic ethos and enduring commitment to strengthening parliamentary democracy, dialogue and cooperation among Commonwealth nations.

Similarly, the 86th All India Presiding Officers' Conference, held in Lucknow, deliberated on various issues and adopted six resolutions, including building consensus among all political parties to ensure a minimum of 30 sittings per year in State Legislative bodies and the use of technology to enhance legislative efficiency. Presiding Officers, who are sentinels of the Constitution and custodians of democratic decorum, adopted these six resolutions to meet benchmarks in parliamentary and legislative functioning.

Forces prepared to protect citizens: PM

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi, in a series of posts on Republic Day, said the parade offered a glimpse into the strengthening capabilities of India's security forces, adding that "our forces are truly our pride". He noted that the Republic Day parade showcased India's formidable security apparatus, reflecting the nation's preparedness, technological capability, and unwavering commitment to safeguarding its citizens.

The Prime Minister also said the celebrations featured a vivid display of India's cultural mosaic at Kartavya Path, where vibrant performances and tableaux celebrated the country's rich cultural diversity.

Referring to the chief guests, PM Modi said India felt honoured to host the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission on Republic Day. "India is privileged to host European Council President Antonio Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen during our Republic Day celebrations. Their presence underscores the growing strength of the India-European Union partnership and our commitment to shared values", he remarked.

In the same post on X, he said the visit of the Republic Day guests was set to add momentum to deepening engagement and cooperation between India and Europe across a range of sectors.

The Prime Minister said the Kartvya Path witnessed a powerful display of national pride as Republic Day was celebrated on Sunday. He also posted images of missile displays during the parade, noting that India marked the occasion with great enthusiasm and pride. Describing the parade as magnificent, he said it showcased the richness of India's heritage and unity.

The Prime Minister also engaged actively with the proceedings of the Republic Day parade amid a surge of patriotic fervour. He was explaining the military and cultural significance of the parade tableaux to the chief guests, keeping the European Union delegation informed throughout the event.

With maroon turban, Modi maintains headgear custom

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

CONTINUING his tradition of showcasing India's rich regional textile heritage through his choice of headgear, Prime Minister Narendra Modi once again drew attention on Republic Day with his turban.

This year, he wore a deep maroon turban adorned with an intricate gold peacock-feather motif, complete with a long, flowing maroon-and-green tail that caught the eye as soon as he arrived at the venue.

The Prime Minister paired the turban with a dark navy blue-and-white kurta–pyajama and a light blue half-jacket. Over the years, Modi's turbans have become a visual chronicle of India's rich textile heritage.

In 2014, he was seen wearing a bright red Jodhpuri "bandhej" turban, while the following year, he donned a yellow turban embellished with multicoloured criss-cross lines.

Last year on Republic Day, he chose a red and yellow Bandhej 'safa' (turban), its vibrant hues complemented by a long, elegantly draping tail.

Cong accuses Centre of diluting caste in census exercise, wants stakeholder meet

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

CONGRESS on Monday said one of the questions included in the first phase of the upcoming Census raises serious questions on the government's true intentions for the caste census and demanded that it hold talks with political parties, states, and civil society organisations before finalising the details of the caste enumeration exercise.

Noting that the Centre has just notified the list of subjects to be covered in the houselisting and housing census schedule, Congress general secretary in charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, said 'Question 12' asks whether the head of a household belongs to the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, or 'Other' categories rather than explicitly asking about OBC and general categories.

Last week, the government notified 33 questions that will be put to citizens during the first phase of the Census, starting April 1.

Although the government announced last year that caste enumeration would form part of the upcoming census, it has not yet clarified the methodology. "Since caste enumeration is to be part of Census 2027, Question 12 as formulated does raise serious questions on the Modi government's true intentions and on its commitment to a comprehensive, fair, nationwide caste census," said Ramesh in a post on X.

"The INC now calls upon the Modi government to immediately initiate a dialogue with political parties, state governments, and civil society organisations before finalising the details of the caste enumeration exercise," Ramesh said.

He pointed out that such consultations were an integral part of the SEEEPC Survey that was carried out by the Telangana government in 2025 and which remains the most comprehensive and meaningful way to gather vital caste-wise information on education, employment, income, and political engagement. These are essential for ensuring greater economic and social justice, Ramesh added.

It should be recalled that the Modi government had rejected the idea of a caste census all along, the Congress leader said. "On April 30, 2025, the Modi government did a complete u-turn and suddenly announced that caste enumeration would be included in Census 2027," he said.

2027 enumeration to capture data digitally

The 2027 census will capture caste data electronically in the population enumeration phase of the process, the government had said earlier. As per records, the last comprehensive caste-based count was done between 1881 and 1931. Caste was excluded from all census operations conducted since Independence.

UGC's equality push on campuses angers general category students

S LALITHA & NAMITA BAJPAI
@ New Delhi/Lucknow

A sustained fortnight-long campaign by students and parents opposing the University Grants Commission's "Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions Regulations, 2026" is gaining traction and beginning to leave political ripples. The protest has now seen the resignation of ten office-bearers of the Lucknow unit of a prominent political party in Uttar Pradesh, while Senior Divisional Magistrate Alankar Agnihotri has also reportedly resigned in protest.

BJP Yuva Morcha Noida vice president Raju Pandit resigned with immediate effect, citing strong opposition to the new UGC regulations. In a statement, he called the policy a "black law" and accused it of being biased against upper-caste students. A PIL challenging the regulations—issued on January 13—has been filed in the Supreme Court.

The hashtags #UGCRollback, #ShameonUGC and #UGCRegulations trended nationally for several days. Critics argue the regulations are discriminatory toward General Category students, effectively positioning them as potential perpetrators of harassment.

The rules mandate equity committees in all higher education institutions that must include members from other backward classes, SC, ST persons with disabilities and women, excluding the general category entirely. These regulations replace the UGC's 2012 anti-discrimination framework. Many education experts have expressed alarm, with several describing the regulations as unconstitutional and unimplementable. One senior academic said: "If challenged, the court will have to nullify it. It openly discriminates against the open-category students."

Another warned that the rules could be misused to file false complaints against forward community students without any safeguards. Some prominent voices have amplified the backlash online. Author Anand Ranganathan urged the UGC and prime minister to revise the rules, highlighting that the definition of caste discrimination excludes the general category and there is no provision for penalising false complaints. Financial expert Mohandas Pai called the regulations "draconian" and demanded their withdrawal.

Bareilly city magistrate resigns over UGC norms

Bareilly City Magistrate Alankar Agnihotri has resigned from his post with immediate effect. He stated that he is taking this step in protest against new UGC Regulations 2026 on equality and on getting deeply hurt by the incident of assault on Jytoirpeeth Shankaracharya and his disciples during the Prayagraj Magh Mela.

Centre presses for fully green disposal of fly ash

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi

THE Union Government has issued a draft amendment notification regarding the utilisation of fly ash, a byproduct of coal thermal power plants (TPPs), in an eco-friendly manner. It has requested suggestions within 60 days from the date of the notification, which mandates 100% utilisation of fly ash.

In the notification, the government acknowledged various stakeholders' concerns regarding the implementation of the Ash Utilisation Notification of 2021. Fly ash from TPPs poses a significant environmental issue in India, contributing to air, land, and water pollution. The presence of fly ash diminishes the fertility of nearby agricultural land, and residents living within a 5 km radius often report respiratory disorders due to emissions.

The government is inviting objections and suggestions from affected stakeholders within 60 days to address the issue. The notification states that the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), in collaboration with the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), will prepare a plan for handling ash waste. Previously, the CPCB was authorised to do this in consultation with the CEA.

Additionally, the notification mandates that all mines—whether government, public, or private sector—must undertake backfilling of voids or stowing of both operating and abandoned mines located within a 300 km radius (by road) of coal or lignite thermal power plants with fly ash.

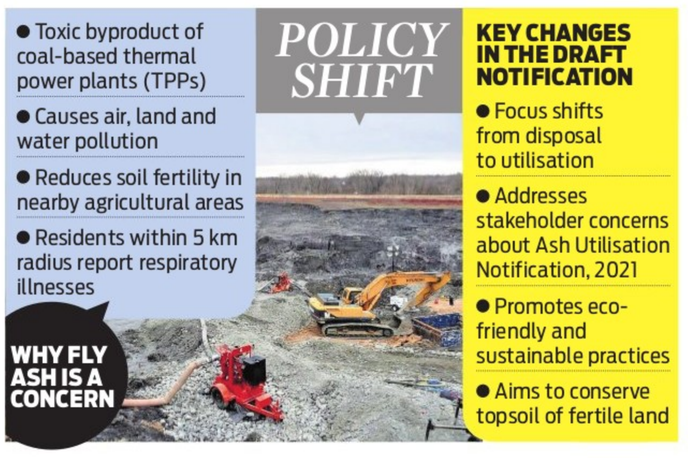
This process will occur under the guidelines of the Director General of Mines Safety.

The notification also identifies stakeholders, including the ministries of coal, road transport and highways, ports, shipping and waterways, micro, small and medium enterprises, and the department for promotion of industry and internal trade, along with the CPCB and CEA.

In the first year of a two-year cycle, non-compliance with the requirement to utilise at least 80% of total ash will result in a fine of ₹1,000 per ton. If there is no utilisation of ash during the entire three-year cycle, violators will be liable to pay an environmental compensation of ₹1,000 per ton on the unutilised quantity.

To facilitate this, the CPCB and CEA will develop an online portal to track utilisation in real-time over the next six months. The CEA is tasked with monitoring ash utilisation and ensuring compliance with the provisions by thermal power plants on a quarterly basis.

The 2021 notification supersedes the 1999 notification, with further amendments made in December 2022 and January 2024. The current notification is an amendment to the 2021 notification aimed at managing pollution and conserving land by shifting the focus from disposal to utilisation in products.


POLICY SHIFT
• Toxic byproduct of coal-based thermal power plants (TPPs)
• Causes air, land and water pollution
• Reduces soil fertility in nearby agricultural areas
• Residents within 5 km radius report respiratory illnesses
WHY FLY ASH IS A CONCERN
KEY CHANGES IN THE DRAFT NOTIFICATION
• Focus shifts from disposal to utilisation
• Addresses stakeholder concerns about Ash Utilisation Notification, 2021
• Promotes eco-friendly and sustainable practices
• Aims to conserve topsoil of fertile land

Govt to prepare plan to handle coal residue

The notification states that the Central Electricity Authority, in collaboration with the Central Pollution Control Board, will prepare a plan for handling ash waste. Previously, the CPCB was authorised for this in consultation with the CEA. Additionally, the notification mandates all mines—government, public, or private—must undertake backfilling of voids or stowing of operating and abandoned mines located within a 300 km radius of thermal power plants with fly ash.

HELIUM GAS BLAST

Five people, including three women, were injured after a helium gas cylinder used for filling balloons exploded in Malegaon town of Maharashtra's Nashik district on Monday morning, police said.

6 KILLED IN TWO SEPARATE ROAD ACCIDENTS IN RAJASTHAN

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	26	14	Mumbai	27	23
Bhopal	26	16	Panaji	32	22
Jaipur	22	13	Patna	22	12
Amritsar	13	08	Lucknow	23	12
Chennai	28	24	Port Blair	29	25
Kolkata	27	16	Imphal	23	10
Srinagar	03	-1	Chandigarh	15	11

Ratlam prof cheating case leads MP police to int'l syndicate, fake NGOs

Authorities say SE Asia-based groups use dummy Indian bank accounts to deposit looted sum

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhopal

CYBER fraudsters operating from Southeast Asia and targeting Indians are depositing their criminal proceeds into bank accounts opened in the names of business firms/NGOs existing only on paper.

A multi-layered international cybercrime racket being run from Cambodia recently used services of multiple interstate rings involved in opening and providing mule accounts to park ₹1.34 crore extorted from a retired professor and wife from Ratlam district of Madhya Pradesh by keeping them under digital arrest for 28 long days.

A probe has revealed that cyber fraudsters, possibly operating from Cambodia, who posed as Mumbai crime branch sleuths, first convinced the retired professor about a SIM card issued in his name and bank account operating in his name, having been used in laundering ₹247 crore. They then extorted ₹1.34 crore from them in November-December 2025.

"The fraud was reported to the Ratlam district police, only after the couple's son came from Canada and found his parents had become victims of a massive digital arrest fraud," a senior police officer in Ratlam district said on Sunday.

"A detailed analysis of the IP addresses used in the crime revealed a strong possibility of the digital arrest fraud having originated from Cambodia. Subsequent investigations led the SIT to multiple rackets in different states of India, that were providing mule accounts to the international racket," Ratlam district police superintendent Amit Kumar said.

So far, the SIT formed to probe the case, has arrested 15 persons from six states, including five from Gujarat (Jamnagar and Ahmedabad), five from MP's Jabalpur and Neemuch, two from Assam, one each from UP and Bihar and one from Jammu.

Importantly, a young woman based in Jammu has emerged so far as the nucleus of the mule account network in India in the concerned case. "As many as six mule accounts opened in MP, Gujarat, Bihar, UP and Assam, were used to park the ₹1.34 crore extorted from the elderly couple of Ratlam district, before being transferred to the second layer of 64 more bank accounts, who details are still being extracted," Ratlam district police's cyber cell incharge Amit Kori said.

The six mule accounts were particularly opened in private banks under the names of business firms and NGOs operating merely on paper. The bogus business firms which existed only on paper were shown in documents to have turnover, spanning between ₹50 lakh and ₹1 crore. The graduates, intermediate and high-school pass individuals who were shown to be directors or officials of the companies/NGOs were promised money out of the funds parked into those accounts.

In case of the mule account sourced from Jabalpur (MP), there were at least four men involved, including the account holder, a middleman, the persons who got the account opened in the private bank and the person who provided that account to the upper layer of the racket being run by the Jammu-based woman Sumiran Sharma. It was learnt that the six accounts in MP, UP, Bihar, Assam and Gujarat, were not just used to park the money extorted from the elderly couple residing in Ratlam (MP), but other money of similar cyber crimes committed elsewhere in the country.

"In one of the accounts, ₹1 crore was routed in a day, before being transferred into multiple accounts. Each of the six mule accounts arranged by the Jammu-based woman were used just for a day for parking the illicit money and transferring it into a second layer of 64 more mule accounts later," SIT member, sub-inspector Jeevan Baria said.

₹1.34 crore extorted from a retired Ratlam couple via digital arrest in Nov–Dec 2025

RACKET, LIKELY FROM CAMBODIA, USED INDIAN MULE ACCOUNTS TO PARK ILLICIT FUNDS

WEB OF CRIME

Fraudsters posed as Mumbai crime branch, falsely claiming the couple laundered **₹247 crore**

Crime discovered after son returned from Canada; case filed at DD Nagar, Ratlam

15 arrests across 6 states
Gujarat **(5)**, MP **(5)**, Assam **(2)**, UP **(1)**, Bihar **(1)**, Jammu **(1)**

IP analysis pointed to Cambodia; networks supplied mule accounts in India

Jammu woman coordinated mule accounts using paper-only firms, NGOs, people

Nabin's first Bengal visit today, to focus on Bihar, J'khand natives for polls

SUBHENDU MAITI @ Kolkata

EYEING the Bihari vote bank in West Bengal, Nitin Nabin, the newly appointed national president of BJP, is all set to pay his maiden visit to the state starting Tuesday.

He is also likely to attend the party's organisational meetings in Durgapur and Asansol, two Hindi heartlands. Sources in the BJP's Bengal leadership said that Nabin, who hails from Bihar, would be busy with party programmes in the two Hindi belts after he lands at the steel city of Bengal on January 27.

Nabin will visit the Kalam Mela in Durgapur and chair a meeting to get the political pulse from the party workers hardly three months ahead of the Bengal Assembly polls.

On January 28, he will visit Bhiringi Kali temple in the town and attend two meetings in Durgapur and adjoining Asansol, sources said requesting anonymity. Political observers feel that Nabin's visit is significant in terms of electoral benefits of BJP in the upcoming Assembly polls.

Kirti Azad and Shatrughan Sinha, the two sitting Trinamool Congress MPs from Bardhaman-Durgapur and Asansol constituencies, are Bihar natives. To woo Hindi voters, many with their roots in neighbouring states Bihar and Jharkhand, the ruling party leadership in Bengal had fielded Azad and Sinha in two Lok Sabha constituencies in the last parliamentary polls in 2024.

These areas in West Burdwan district were once a BJP stronghold, and the party hopes that Nabin's visit would galvanise the large numbers of Bihari voters who live there, they felt. The BJP had bagged both seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, with SS Ahluwalia winning from Burdwan-Durgapur and Babul Supriyo — now with Trinamool — from Asansol.

Visit significant in terms of poll benefits: Observers

According to sources privy to the matter, on January 28, Nitin Nabin will visit Bhiringi Kali temple in the town and attend two meetings in Durgapur and adjoining Asansol, sources said requesting anonymity. Political observers feel that Nabin's visit is significant in terms of electoral benefits of BJP in the upcoming Assembly elections.

MUMBAI DIARY

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI
Our correspondent in Maharashtra
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Young face pitch for Congress in elections

There is talk within the Congress party that if it really wants to bounce back in Maharashtra, it should choose a young face like Congress MLA and former minister Amit Deshmukh as the face of Maharashtra Congress for elections. The party secured a simple majority in the Latur Municipal Corporation election because of Deshmukh. Without any outside support, Congress will have its own Mayor in Latur. He is the son of the late former chief minister Vilasrao Deshmukh. The party high command also feels Amit Deshmukh can bring positive change to the state unit. However, the timing of handing him the reins is undecided.

BJP on toes, rethinking its alliance strategy

Following the abysmal performance of Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar, a debate has begun within the BJP about ending its dependence on alliance partners. Many leaders feel power should no longer be shared with Ajit Pawar or Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. If the BJP wants to form a government on its own in 2029, it must strengthen its own leaders across regions and districts. This approach could help the party elect more MLAs and MPs. To achieve this, the BJP may need to gradually disown alliances. Many in the BJP feel this is the time to disown Ajit Pawar-led NCP, and disown Shinde after the district Panchayat polls.

Mumbai BJP stares at tough questions

The top BJP leadership is unhappy with the Mumbai unit, led by MLA Amit Satam, over its poor performance in the BMC elections. The party increased its tally by only seven seats, from 82 in 2017 to 89 in the 2026 elections, despite full use of resources, money, and government machinery. BJP contested 137 of 227 seats and expected to cross the 100-mark to form the civic government alone. That plan failed mainly because of the consolidation of Marathi votes. Local BJP leaders blame the Shinde-led Shiv Sena, which won only 29 of the 90 seats it contested. Sena leaders are hitting back, saying the BJP failed to add numbers.

Schoolteacher held for Jinnah slogan on R-Day

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

A government schoolteacher was arrested on Monday from Bihar's Supaul district for raising slogans in favour of Pakistan's founder and its first governor general, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, during the 77th Republic Day celebration.

Mansoor Alam, an assistant teacher at Model Upgraded Middle School, started raising slogans like 'Mohammed Janna Amar Rahen (Live Long Mohammad Jinna) as soon as the national anthem ended after hosting the national flag.

Students who were reciting national anthem also followed Alam. Other teachers and residents who had gathered in the school premises to celebrate the Republic Day were stunned at Alam's behaviour. Agitated residents demanded disciplinary action against Alam's behaviour against the Indian Constitution and insulting the national anthem.

As the situation worsened due to residents' protest, headmaster Dhananjay Tiwary sought immediate intervention of police. A police team led by station house officer Gyan Ranjan Kumar immediately reached the spot and pacified the crowd.

Men face jail after live-in affairs fail as laws favour women: Allahabad HC

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

MEN face FIRs and get convicted after live-in relations fail as the laws favour women since they were formulated when the concept of live-in did not exist, the Allahabad HC has held.

The court made the observation while hearing a criminal appeal on March 6, 2024, by the Special Judge, Exclusive Court (Pocso Act), Maharajganj district. The appellant, who faced trial in a case lodged in August 2021, challenged the order.

The court stated, "In view of the consideration of the evidence and arguments, the Judgment and Order passed by the learned Maharajganj trial court cannot be sustained and is hereby set aside. The appellant is in jail, he is directed to be set free, if not wanted in any other case."

The Maharajganj court had convicted and sentenced the appellant under all sections, including awarding seven years imprisonment besides fines under relevant IPC sections and life imprisonment under SC/ST Act.

However, the HC division bench of Justices Siddharth and Prashant Mishra, said, ".... After such relationships fail, FIR is lodged and the laws being in favour of women, the boys/men get convicted relying upon the laws which were made when the concept of live-in was nowhere in existence."

According to the prosecution, a youth from the OBC community, allegedly enticed away a Dalit girl from his village in February 2021. The girl returned to her parents' home in August of the same year. Her mother then lodged a case against the youth. Her mother alleged that the youth took her away promising marriage, but turned her out of his house.

Prosecution case

According to the prosecution, a youth allegedly enticed away a girl from his village in Feb 2021. The girl returned to her parents' home in August of the same year. Her mother then lodged a case against the youth. Her mother alleged that the youth took her away promising marriage, but turned her out of his house.

Tap water coverage in urban areas jumps 64% since 2011

PARVEZ SULTAN @ New Delhi

THE Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and its second phase AMRUT 2.0 have delivered a series of achievements.

Since 2011, tap water coverage in urban areas increased from 49% in 2011 to around 77%. According to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), 228 lakh tap connections have been provided so far. It has also added 20 lakh sewer connections, rejuvenated 7,480 acres of water bodies, and developed 2,704 acres of green space. After its launch in 2015, under AMRUT, 6,008 projects at a total cost of ₹83,470.84 crore were approved. Of these, works worth ₹80,808 crore have been completed, with ₹74,150 crore already spent. Under AMRUT 2.0, which was introduced in 2021, ₹7,022 crore has been sanctioned as the Central share in the financial year 2025–26, of which ₹4,870 crore has been utilised. Actual expenditure on AMRUT 2.0 projects in the current financial year has already reached ₹13,400 crore.

Nearly 9,000 projects worth ₹1.89 lakh crore including operations and maintenance cost were approved Under AMRUT 2.0.

"Through the Mission and its convergence with other schemes, 228 lakh tap connections have been provided, along with 20 lakh sewer connections, including coverage under Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM). Around 6,000 megalitres per day (MLD) of treated water is now being reused across states and UTs," said ministry officials.

Under the 'Jal Hi Amrit' initiative, 25 states and UTs have established Water Resource Recovery Cells (WRRCs) to enhance treated water and biosolids management. The AMRUT Mitra initiative has engaged over 28,000 women self-help group members to support water demand management, quality monitoring, billing, and plant maintenance.

The mission has also led to the rejuvenation of 7,480 acres of water bodies and development of 2,704 acres of green space. AMRUT 2.0 aims to provide basic urban services to households and build amenities in cities for improving the quality of life for all especially the urban poor and disadvantaged people as a national importance with the foremost priority of making cities water secure. It envisages providing assured supply of 2.68 crore new household tap water connections and universal household coverage of sewerage or septage services in 500 selected cities with 2.64 crore new sewer connections.

Urban tap water coverage rose from **49%** to **77%**, with 228 lakh tap connections

20 lakh sewer connections added, **7,480** acres of water bodies rejuvenated

TAPPING POTENTIAL
6,008 AMRUT PROJECTS OF ₹83K CR APPROVED AFTER LAUNCH IN 2015

AMRUT 2.0 approved **9,000** projects worth ₹1.89 lakh cr; ₹13,400 cr spent in current fiscal

'Jal Hi Amrit' & AMRUT Mitra involve 25 states/UTs and **28,000** women for water management

'India Hindu nation, no more approval needed'

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

RASHTRIYA Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat said India was a "Hindu nation" and therefore no constitutional approval was required because it was the "truth". Addressing a Social Harmony Seminar and Dialogue Programme in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, he said there was no need to declare the country a Hindu nation, as it was already one.

Bhagwat said, "There is diversity in society, not division. The British widened the divisions. We have to overcome that division and unite Hindu society." Speaking on the Hindu population, he said, "No one has stopped the Hindu community from having three children. The government also advises having one child or two."

He said there was a focus on creating conditions for the country's growth, but challenges remained. "Some countries are not happy with India's progress; they see a threat to their own interests, and therefore, they are trying to create obstacles in our path," he said.

Bhagwat said that one nation would not fear another when there was interdependence, and added that harmony in the world was extremely important, as without it, people would fight and destroy each other. "No foreign power subjugated India solely through its military strength. Foreign powers achieved victory by exploiting our internal divisions," he said. He said listing problems was not enough, and solutions must be offered. Virtuous people were trying to solve problems at their respective levels, but this effort needed to reach the grassroots.

Meanwhile, Bhagwat hoisted the tricolour at the RSS North Bihar provincial office, Madhukar Niketan, in Muzaffarpur on Republic Day. He said every soldier martyred on the border was an Indian, and society must introspect on violence. "The Constitution not only grants rights to citizens but also reminds them of their duties," he said.

HARMONY PITCH

1. No constitutional approval needed, Bhagwat says
2. There is diversity in society, not division, he stresses
3. Foreign powers exploited internal divisions, he says
4. Harmony in the world is a must, the RSS chief asserts

Not in favour of dividing J&K: BJP incharge

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh's reiteration that the party stands firmly for a united Jammu and Kashmir, has quelled the demand for a separate Jammu state.

Chugh, who recently addressed BJP MLAs during an intensive training workshop for party legislators in Jammu, asserted that the BJP believes in a fully united Jammu & Kashmir, including the parts of PoJK that have been illegally occupied by Pakistan.

"Under no circumstances will the BJP will tolerate division of J&K. The party is committed to the fact that Jammu and Kashmir is a single entity," he expressed.

Drug racket busted in running train in Mumbai, global links suspected

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

A late-night raid on the Amritsar Mumbai Golden Temple Mail has exposed what investigators say is a multi-city and possibly international drug syndicate, after a Mizoram youth was caught with cocaine and methamphetamine worth more than ₹2.19 crore. The arrest is now linked to a Nigerian woman who was earlier held in Surat with a larger haul.

The train had barely slowed at Borivali late on January 25 when a joint team of the Railway Protection Force and the Narcotics Control Bureau moved in on coach B 4. Acting on specific intelligence, officers searched a 32-year-old passenger from Mizoram, Lalfakmavia, whose backpack and trolley bag carried more contraband than clothes.

The accused in police custody | EXPRESS

The search revealed 436 grams of cocaine valued at ₹2.18 crore, 19 grams of Yaba pills or methamphetamine worth ₹1.50 lakh, five bottles of codeine cough syrup weighing 649 grams, and 8 grams of Alprazolam tablets. The total value exceeded ₹2.19 crore, making the interception a major narcotics bust.

During questioning, Lalfakmavia said he lives in Delhi with his sister and brother-in-law and earns money by doing odd household work. He told investigators a Nigerian woman, a friend of his sister, gave him a packet wrapped in dog food packaging. "It looked completely normal," he said, adding she paid him ₹3,000 and travel expenses to deliver it to Mumbai.

The statement matched an earlier seizure on January 24, when the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence in Surat intercepted a Nigerian woman on the same train from Faridabad to Mumbai. Officers recovered 50 grams of cocaine worth ₹50 lakh and 900 grams of methamphetamine, valued at ₹2.30 crore.

Officials believe the arrests are connected. "The pattern, the packaging and the route point to an organised syndicate," one officer said. The NCB has registered offences under the NDPS Act.

18 deaths
as Northeast sees more snow from tail end of colossal winter storm

GLOBAL WEATHER
LR: Light Rain • HR: Heavy Rain • LS: Light Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	29	19	SNY	Los Angeles	20	12	SNY
Colombo	29	23	TDS	Melbourne	17	5	LC
Dhaka	27	16	TDS	Moscow	4	2	SNY
Dubai	26	22	SNY	New York	2	-3	SNY
Houston	30	23	TDS	Singapore	27	25	TDS
Istanbul	33	21	SNY	Toronto	-6	-8	SNY
London	12	8	SNY	Washington	3	-2	SNY

Ted Cruz says Trump team resisting trade deal with India

WASHINGTON

REPUBLICAN Senator Ted Cruz has blamed White House trade adviser Peter Navarro, Vice President J D Vance and President Donald Trump for resisting a trade deal with India, according to a US media report.

During private meetings with donors, Cruz told them about "battling" the White House to accept a trade agreement with India, Axios reported, citing audio recordings of their conversation provided by a Republican source.

When a donor asked who in the administration is resistant to reaching such accords, Cruz mentioned White House economic adviser Peter Navarro, Vance and "sometimes" Trump, it said, citing a nearly 10-minute recording that dates back to early and mid-2025.

PTI could not independently verify the authenticity of the audio. The Texas Republican Senator, who is eyeing a 2028 White House run, also warned that Trump's tariffs could decimate the economy and lead to his impeachment.

Cruz said that after Trump introduced the tariffs in early April 2025, he and a few other senators had a call with the President in which they urged him to stand down. He said the lengthy call, which stretched past midnight, "did not go well," and that Trump was "yelling" and "cursing." The India-US ties witnessed a major downturn after President Trump slapped a whopping 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods, including a 25 per cent punitive levy over Russian oil purchases.

Both sides held several negotiation rounds last year on a bilateral trade deal, but talks stalled over Washington's push to open India's farm and dairy sectors. Ties have also been strained by Trump's claim of ending the India-Pakistan conflict and Washington's new immigration policy. *PTI*

A security personnel holds a person as the agents try to clear the demonstrators near a hotel, using tear gas during a demonstration against federal immigration enforcement operations in Minneapolis | AP

Judge to review ICE enforcement amid crackdown

Democrats vow to block Homeland Security fund after fatal shooting, raising shutdown risk

WASHINGTON

A FEDERAL judge will hear arguments on Monday on whether she should at least temporarily halt the immigration crackdown in Minnesota that has led to the fatal shootings of two people by government officers.

The state of Minnesota and the cities of Minneapolis and St Paul sued the Department of Homeland Security earlier this month, five days after Renee Good was shot by an Immigration and Customs officer. The shooting of Alex Pretti by a Border Patrol officer on Saturday has only added urgency to the case. Since the original court filing, the state and cities have substantially added to their original request in an effort to restore the order that existed before the Trump administration launched Operation Metro Surge in Minnesota on December 1.

The lawsuit asks US District Judge Katherine Menendez to order a reduction in the number of federal law enforcement officers and agents in Minnesota back to the level before the surge and to limit the scope of the enforcement operation.

Meanwhile, Democratic senators are vowing to oppose a funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security following the shooting death of a 37-year-old Minnesota man, a stand that increases the prospect of a partial government shutdown by the end of the week.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer, in a social media post hours after the Saturday shooting, said that what is happening in Minnesota is "appalling" and that Democrats "will not provide the votes to proceed to the appropriations bill if the DHS funding bill is included."

Six of the 12 annual spending bills for the current budget year have been signed into law by President Donald Trump. Six more await Senate action, despite a House Democrat revolt and growing calls to impeach Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem. If senators fail to act by midnight Friday, funding for Homeland Security and the other agencies covered under the six bills will lapse. *AP*

Weeks before polls, tribunal sentences ex-Dhaka police chief, 2 others to death

DHAKA

FORMER Dhaka police commissioner and two other police officers were on Monday sentenced to death by a special Bangladesh tribunal for their alleged role during the 2024 violent street protests that led to then prime minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster.

A three-judge panel of Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT-BD), led by Justice Mohammad Golam Mortuza Mozumder, handed down the sentence to former Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) commissioner Habibur Rahman, former DMP joint commissioner Sudip Kumar Chakraborty and additional deputy commissioner Mohammad Akhtarul Islam after their trial in absentia.

This is the second verdict delivered by the restructured ICT-BD which earlier handed down the death penalty to deposed premier Hasina and then home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal.

"These three (convicts) had superior status over their subordinates and are liable for superior command responsibility. They are found guilty and hereby awarded a single sentence of death," the judgment said. The tribunal also sentenced Dhaka's assistant police commissioner Mohammad Imrul to six years, inspector Arshad Hossain to four years and three constables Sujon Hossain, Imaj Hossain and Nasirul Islam to three-year prison terms.

The three former police officers who received the capital punishment and assistant commissioner Imrul were tried in absentia as the tribunal earlier declared them as fugitives while the others faced the trial in person. The ICT-BD, which tries crimes against humanity, found the accused guilty of an incident in which six people were killed by police gunshots in Dhaka's Chankharpul area on August 5, 2024, the day the then government was toppled. ICT-BD chief prosecutor Muhammad Tajul Islam expressed dissatisfaction over the "relatively lenient punishments" for those awarded jail terms.

"Though it is customary to say 'much obliged' after any judgment of the court, we intend to file an appeal," he said.

In November, Hasina was sentenced to death in absentia by the ICT-BD for "crimes against humanity" over her government's brutal crackdown on student-led protests. *PTI*

ASIA MATTERS

INDONESIA

FIRST BATCH OF RAFALE JETS ARRIVE

Indonesia has received its first three French-made Rafale fighter jets as part of a multibillion-dollar deal between the two countries, a defence ministry spokesman said Monday. The jets are part of an $8.1 billion deal agreed in 2022 by then defence minister Prabowo Subianto to purchase 42 French-made Rafale fighters. The three aircraft arrived in Indonesia on Friday and are currently at a military airbase, defence ministry spokesman Rico Ricardo Sirait said. "The arrival of these Rafale is an important part of the modernisation of the Indonesian Air Force," Rico told AFP

SINGAPORE

INDIAN DIASPORA CELEBRATES R-DAY

Indian High Commissioner Dr Shilpak Ambule led the Indian diaspora community to celebrate the 77th Republic Day event. Dr Ambule read the President's address and congratulated over 1,200 members of the community, who gathered for the event. Students performed cultural dances played to traditional music

MALAYSIA

MORE THAN 4 CR VISITORS LAST YEAR

More than four crore people visited Malaysia in 2025, an 11.2% increase compared to the 3.8 crore visitors in 2024 and 20% increase compared to 3.5 crore vistors in 2019. "The government is strengthening coordination across all ministries and agencies to ensure the tourism industry remains the main driver of the country's economic growth," Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said. He said the positive performance reflected the continued momentum of the country's tourism industry as the main driver of its economic growth.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy

US security agreement '100% ready', says Zelenskyy

VILNIUS

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday that a US security guarantees document for Ukraine is "100% ready" after two days of talks involving representatives from Ukraine, the US and Russia.

Speaking to journalists in Vilnius during a visit to Lithuania, Zelenskyy said Ukraine is waiting for its partners to set a signing date, after which the document would go to the US Congress and Ukrainian parliament for ratification.

Zelenskyy also emphasized Ukraine's push for European Union membership by 2027, calling it an "economic security guarantee".

The Ukrainian leader described the talks in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, as likely the first trilateral format in "quite a long while" that included not only diplomats but military representatives from all three sides.

The talks, which began on Friday and continued Saturday, were the latest aiming to end Russia's nearly four-year full-scale invasion.

Zelenskyy acknowledged fundamental differences between Ukrainian and Russian positions, reaffirming territorial issues as a major sticking point. "Our position regarding our territory—Ukraine's territorial integrity—must be respected," he said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed a Ukraine settlement with US President Donald Trump's envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner during marathon talks late Thursday. The Kremlin insisted that to reach a peace deal, Kyiv must withdraw its troops from the areas in the east that Russia illegally annexed but has not fully captured.

Zelenskyy said the US is trying to find a compromise, but that "all sides must be ready for compromise." Negotiators will return to the UAE on February 1 for the next round of talks, according to a US official. *AP*

US aircraft carrier reaches West Asia

WASHINGTON

THE aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and three accompanying warships have arrived in the West Asia, bringing a renewed potential that President Donald Trump could opt to order airstrikes on Iran over its crackdown on protesters.

The carrier, along with three destroyers, "is currently deployed to the West Asia to promote regional security and stability," US Central Command said Monday on social media. The strike group was in the Indian Ocean, Central Command said, and not in the Arabian Sea, which borders Iran. It will bring thousands of additional service members to the region, which has not had a US aircraft carrier since the USS Gerald R Ford was ordered in October to sail to the Caribbean as part of a pressure campaign on then-Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

Trump told reporters last week that the ships were sent to the region "just in case." "We have a massive fleet heading in that direction, and maybe we won't have to use it," he said.

Trump earlier had threatened military action if Iran carried out mass executions of prisoners or killed peaceful demonstrators during a crackdown on protests that began in late December. At least 5,973 people were killed and 41,800 detained, activists say, while Iran's official toll stands at 3,117 deaths.

More recently, Trump appeared to have backed away from possible action, claiming Iran halted the hangings of 800 detained protesters. He has not elaborated on the source of the claim, which Iran's top prosecutor called "completely false." However, Trump appears to be keeping his options open. *AP*

Israel recovers remains of last hostage, opens way for next Gaza truce phase

JERUSALEM

THE remains of the final hostage in Gaza have been recovered, Israel's military said Monday, clearing the way for the next phase of the ceasefire that paused the Israel-Hamas war.

The announcement that the remains of Ran Gvili had been found and identified came a day after Israel's government said the military was conducting a "large-scale operation" in a cemetery in northern Gaza to locate them.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called it "an incredible achievement" for Israel and its soldiers, telling Israeli media that "I promised we would bring everyone home and we have brought everyone home." He said Gvili, who was killed during the Hamas-led attack on October 7, 2023, that sparked the war, was among the first to be taken into Gaza.

The return of all remaining hostages, living or dead, has been a key part of the Gaza ceasefire's first phase, and Gvili's family had urged Israel's government not to enter the second phase until his remains were recovered and returned.

Netanyahu's office said Sunday that Israel would open the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt, which Palestinians see as their lifeline to the world, once the search for Gvili was finished. It has been largely shut since May 2024, except for a small period in early 2025.

Israel and Hamas had been under pressure from ceasefire mediators including Washington to move into the second phase of the US-brokered truce, which took effect on October 10.

Israel had repeatedly accused Hamas of dragging its feet in the recovery of the final hostage. Hamas said it had provided all the information it had about Gvili's remains, and accused Israel of obstructing efforts to search for them in areas of Gaza under Israeli military control. Israel's military had said the large-scale operation to locate Gvili's remains was "in the area of the Yellow Line" that divides the territory.

A woman carries a photo of Israeli hostage Ran Gvili after the announcement that his remains were recovered from Gaza | AP

WAR WATCH
ISRAEL-GAZA: DAY 843

TOLL SO FAR
71,660

GLOBAL CRACKDOWN ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Interpol-led operation nets 3,700+ arrests, 4,400 potential victims rescued

OPERATION LIBERTERRA III — AT A GLANCE

Countries involved: **119**

Duration: **Nov 10–21**

Officers deployed: **14,000**

KEY OUTCOMES

Arrests: **3,744** suspects

Illegal migration cases detected: **12,992** people

Potential victims protected **4,414**

New investigations launched: **720+**

WHAT INTERPOL SAYS

Criminal networks are evolving — using new routes, digital platforms and vulnerable populations — requiring faster identification of trafficking patterns to disrupt operations early.

EMERGING TRENDS

Rising cases involving South American and Asian victims in Africa

Shift from traditional pattern of African victims trafficked abroad

DANGEROUS ROUTES INTERCEPTED

Coastal routes: Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Morocco, Algeria

Land networks: Peru, Brazil and others

HOW THE SCAMS WORK

Victims lured with fake overseas job offers → charged high fees → forced to recruit friends or family → pyramid-style exploitation

WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA ACTION

COUNTRIES: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone

200+ victims rescued

Multiple recruitment and exploitation hubs dismantled

EXPRESS READ

Seven dead in Maine snowstorm jet crash

PORTLAND: A Bombardier Challenger 600 crashed during takeoff in a snowstorm at Maine's Bangor airport, killing seven and leaving one survivor. The jet model has a history of ice-related wing failures. Investigators are probing whether the aircraft was deiced before departure. The airport remains closed as federal agencies examine wreckage, weather conditions and air traffic control recordings from the incident.

European Union opens investigation into Musk's AI chatbot Grok

LONDON

THE European Union opened a formal investigation into Elon Musk's social media platform X on Monday after his artificial intelligence chatbot Grok spewed nonconsensual sexualized deepfake images on the platform.

European regulators also widened a separate, ongoing investigation into X's recommendation systems after the platform said it would switch to Grok's AI system to choose which posts users see.

The scrutiny from Brussels comes after Grok sparked a global backlash by allowing users through its AI image generation and editing capabilities to undress people, putting females in transparent bikinis or revealing clothing. Researchers said some images appeared to include children. Some governments banned the service or issued warnings.

The 27-nation EU's executive said it was looking into whether X has done enough as required by the bloc's digital regulations to contain the risks of spreading illegal content such as "manipulated sexually explicit images." That includes content that "may amount to child sexual abuse material," the European Commission said. These risks have now "materialised," the commission said, exposing the bloc's citizens to "serious harm." Regulators will examine whether Grok is living up to its obligations under the Digital Services Act, the bloc's wide-ranging rule book for keeping internet users safe from harmful content and products.

Elon Musk | AP

In response to a request for comment, an X spokeswoman directed The Associated Press to an earlier statement that the company remains "committed to making X a safe platform for everyone" and that it has "zero tolerance" for child sexual exploitation, nonconsensual nudity, and unwanted sexual content. *AP*

Egypt plans law to curb children's social media use

CAIRO: Egypt's parliament is drafting legislation to regulate children's social media use to curb "digital chaos," following calls from President el-Sissi. Lawmakers will consult government and experts to protect children from harmful content. Move follows similar steps in Australia, UK and France to restrict or ban young users on the platforms.

29.2% The consolidated outstanding liabilities of states as a percentage of GDP likely by March-end 2026, according to an RBI report on state finances

Weaker rupee boosts IT revenues by 6% in FY26

Falling INR provides average 40-60 bps support to operating margins

PADMINI DHRUVARAJ @ Bengaluru

DECLINE in rupee through the first three quarters of FY26 has boosted revenue of India's five largest IT companies by 4-6% even as the discretionary spending has remained muted.

Falling rupee has also provided an average of 40-60 basis points support to operating margins. The local currency has fallen about ₹4.2 against the US dollar so far in FY26. As most Indian IT firms earn a large portion of their income overseas, particularly in the US and Europe, the depreciation has inflated rupee-denominated revenue and profit figures in quarterly results. "For every 1% fall in rupee, revenue typically rises by 0.5% and about 10-20 bps rise in the margin. This quarter, the currency depreciation offset furlough impacts too," said an analyst at a domestic broking firm. The top five Indian IT companies are Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, HCLTech, Wipro and Tech Mahindra.

FOREX IMPACT ON REVENUE		
FY26 QUARTER	QoQ OF TOP 5 IT COMPANIES	YoY OF TOP 5 IT COMPANIES
Q1 FY26	1.5% to 2.5%	3% to 4%
Q2 FY26	2.0% to 3%	3% to 4.5%
Q3 FY26	1.5% to 2.5%	5% to 7%
CONSTANT CURRENCY REVENUE GROWTH		
Q1 FY26	–1.5%	–0.5%
Q2 FY26	0.60%	1.80%
Q3 FY26	1.50%	1.30%

Weak start in Q1FY26

The impact of falling rupee was most evident at the start of the financial year. In Q1, demand conditions remained subdued across global markets, and several firms reported flat or lower revenue when measured in constant currency (cc).

Despite this, rupee revenue appeared stronger as the weaker exchange rate cushioned the impact of slowing volumes. Across the sector, currency movements added roughly 3–4 percentage points to year-on-year revenue growth in Q1, while also softening quarter-on-quarter declines.

Wipro said during its Q1FY26 earnings call: "In constant currency terms, we recorded a decline... From rupee perspective, revenue stood higher on a YoY basis," the company said.

Meanwhile, in Q2 rupee revenue growth exceeded cc growth by 3–4.5 percentage points YoY, while the QoQ boost from currency alone was nearly 2–3 percentage points.

Q3FY26 was where the gap between revenue and underlying growth was the widest. As rupee weakened further, reported YoY revenue growth across the sector increased by about 5–7 percentage points, while QoQ growth received a 1.5–2.5 percentage point lift. Wipro and Tech Mahindra showed the largest divergence between rupee growth and cc performance, particularly in Q1 and Q3 of FY26.

By contrast, HCLTech, which delivered relatively stronger cc growth due to engineering and AI-led deals, showed a smaller relative distortion from currency movements. TCS and Infosys fell between these two extremes, with steady but low single-digit cc growth and a visible forex uplift to headline numbers. However, to understand the real state of business, both the analyst and the management point investors towards cc performance.

Constant currency

To present a clearer picture of business performance, IT firms report revenue growth in constant currency, which recalculates sales as if exchange rates had remained unchanged from the previous period. This measure removes the impact of currency fluctuations and reflects actual changes in volumes, pricing and client demand.

Mkt makes minor move on Budget day

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

EQUITY markets typically stay quiet on Budget day and face selling pressure beforehand, as per Samco Securities' historical data. The 2026 Union Budget looms as a crucial event for markets battered by worsening global factors.

Going through the data since 2010, both Nifty 50 and Nifty Bank show muted and inconsistent reactions on the Budget day. Data shows the average Budget day move stands at just 0.19% for Nifty and 0.42% for Nifty Bank, reinforcing the idea that Budget day volatility is more noise than signal.

"Budget days tend to attract disproportionate attention, but data suggests the real market story often unfolds after the Budget rather than on the day itself," said Apurva Sheth, head of market perspectives and research, SAMCO Securities. Despite being a Sunday, stock markets will be open on February 1, the day when FM will present the Budget for 2026.

Once policy clarity emerges, markets shift focus back to liquidity, earnings, and growth visibility rather than headline announcements... Volatility before the Budget often creates positioning opportunities
—Apurva Sheth, head of market perspectives & research, SAMCO Securities

Sheth added that outcomes vary widely across years, driven by positioning and expectations rather than announcements alone. The pre-Budget phase tells a clearer story. As per the data, markets tend to turn cautious ahead of the event and on average, backward returns are marginally negative (Nifty –0.46%, Nifty Bank –0.03%), indicating profit-booking and risk reduction as uncertainty peaks. The post-Budget phase is where conviction returns. Forward returns improve, with the Nifty averaging +1.35% and Nifty Bank +1.69%. "Once policy clarity emerges, markets shift focus back to liquidity, earnings, and growth visibility rather than headline announcements...Volatility before the Budget often creates positioning opportunities, while the period after the Budget has delivered more consistent returns. For investors, reacting less and positioning better has mattered far more than predicting Budget headlines," said Sheth.

The run-up to this year's Budget has been highly negative. In the week gone by, the Nifty registered losses of about 2.5% and so far in January the benchmark index is down 4.3%.

Equity market is having a turbulent start to 2026 with US President Donald Trump's foreign and tariff policies denting investor sentiment. Sharp depreciation of rupee to record lows, FII selling and earnings delivery falling marginally short of expectations have added to the worry. Vinod Nair, research head, Geojit Investments, said market direction in the Budget week is likely to be driven by global macroeconomic signals and domestic fiscal expectations.

Textile and apparel sector pins hope on Union Budget amid high US tariff

SANAL SUDEVAN @ Chennai

THE Indian textile and apparel sector, among the worst-hit by tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump last year, is pinning its hopes on the upcoming Union Budget even as exporters accelerate efforts to diversify markets and products.

The tariffs, announced in April and implemented from August 27, attracted levies of over 60% on certain categories, denting India's competitiveness in its largest export market. As a result, the sector has seen loss of market share in US exports KM Subramanian, President of the Tiruppur Exporters' Association (TEA), said the industry's key demands include introduction of a focus market scheme for the US, increasing interest subvention to 5% without value limits to support MSME exporters, and greater support for modernisation and tech upgrade.

In a letter to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SGCCI), has sought a cut in GST on chemicals used for man-made fibre like MEG, PTA and polyester staple fibre from 18% to 5%.

Nikhil Madrasi, President of SGCCI, asks for increased benefit under Duty Drawback Scheme, Scheme for Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) and additional benefit of tariff refund linked to direct exports to US on a par with actual tariff paid.

Sagar Shah, partner, tax and regulatory at EY India, said GST on key man-made fibre (MMF) raw materials under Chapters 29 and 39 should be reduced to correct duty inversion."This will ease input tax credit accumulation, lower capital costs and improve export competitiveness." Industry bodies like the Clothing Manufacturers' Association of India (CMAI) have urged the government to levy a uniform 5% GST on ethnic wear priced below ₹10,000 to support domestic brands. The US remains the largest market for Indian textiles and apparel, accounting for exports of nearly $10–12 billion annually.

PFRDA sets up experts panel to revamp NPS framework

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has constituted a high-level committee of investment experts—Strategic Asset Allocation and Risk Governance (SAARG)—to review and modernise the investment framework of the National Pension System (NPS).

The panel has been tasked with undertaking a comprehensive review of existing NPS investment guidelines, benchmarking them against leading global pension systems and aligning them with the evolving Indian investment ecosystem. The objective is to strengthen NPS investment architecture to support retirement wealth creation, enhance diversification, improve risk management practices and expand choice for subscribers. SAARG's mandate includes examining strategic asset allocation frameworks, introduction and review of asset classes, performance measurement and accountability mechanisms, asset-liability management (ALM) practices, valuation standards for alternative investments, portfolio stability and liquidity optimisation measures, governance and intermediary architecture, and integration of sustainability considerations into investment decision-making.

As per PFRDA, the constitution of SAARG underscores its commitment to strengthening the NPS investment framework ensures that it remains resilient, diversified and aligned with long-term needs of subscribers. The panel will be headed by Narayan Ramachandran, former country head and CEO of Morgan Stanley India, who is currently chairman of TeamLease Services.

Axis Bank profit up 3% at ₹6,490 cr, loan book rises 14%, asset quality improves

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

AXIS BANK on Monday declared a 3% growth in net profit for the third quarter of the current financial year.

Net profit of the bank rose to ₹6,490 crore during the quarter up from ₹6,303 crore during the year-ago period. The lender's net interest mncome (NII), the difference between interest earned and paid, grew by 5% to ₹14,287 crore during the quarter. This was primarily driven by a 14% expansion in advances.

However, the Net Interest Margin (NIM) for the quarter stood at 3.64%, a sequential decline from the previous quarter's 3.73%. The bank's focus on granular growth was evident as retail fees accounted for 71% of the total fee income, showing the strength of its consumer franchise.

Deposits grew by 15% during the quarter. Bank's CASA deposits at the end of third quarter stood at 39%. Axis Bank continued to clean up its books, reporting a sequential and yearly improvement in its bad loan ratios. Gross NPA declined to 1.40% from 1.46% in Q3 FY25. Net NPA stood at 0.42%.

For the quarter, provisions and contingencies were ₹2,246 crore. The bank maintains a healthy cumulative provision (standard + additional) of ₹13,111 crore, providing a significant buffer against potential slippages. The bank has recorded an additional expense of ₹25.44 crore towards gratuity, primarily due to changes in the wage definition. As on December 31, 2025, the bank holds a cumulative provision of ₹434.09 crore towards the New Labour Codes.

Renault relaunches Duster, to offer hybrid option

ARSHAD KHAN & SANAL SUDEVAN @ Chennai

RENAULT unveiled its highly anticipated new Duster SUV in India on Monday. The French carmaker is confident that the model, facing over a dozen rivals in the crowded mid-size SUV segment, will attract enthusiastic buyers and position the brand as a major player in the world's third-largest passenger vehicle market.

Renault's renewed focus on the Indian market comes as the country and the European Union are all set to sign a trade pact that could see import tariffs on cars coming down to 40% from as high as 110%. The benefit of the likely trade pact on Renault is yet to be determined given that the brand is heavily invested and localised in India.

To differentiate itself from competing models, the Duster will come with three powertrain options, including a strong Hybrid E-Tech 160 powered by 1.8L engine and 1.4 KWH battery. Renault claims that this is the most powerful hybrid engine in the segment, allowing up to 80% EV mode in city drive conditions.

PHOTO: MARTIN LOUIS

Booking open for a token amount of ₹21,000

Booking for the new Duster are open for a token amount of ₹21,000. Prices of the new Duster will be announced in mid-March and deliveries for turbo engine models will commence from mid April. Deliveries of the hybrid model will begin around Diwali 2026. The Duster hybrid will compete against the hybrid options of Maruti Grand Vitara and Toyota Urban Cruiser Hyryder in the Indian market.

The new Duster is also the first product reveal under Renault International Gameplan 2027 in India where the brand is prioritising targeted investment and product expansion as part of a broader global strategy.

"As part of the Renault International Game Plan 2027, we are making India a key pillar of our growth outside Europe. We now have a strong ecosystem in Chennai, bringing together design, engineering, manufacturing, and local operations at the highest level - making India one of the most complete and powerful hubs in Renault's global network," said Fabrice Cambolive, Chief Growth Officer Renault Group & CEO Renault brand.

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V Vikraman, chief of engineering, Renault Group India, said that Renault is unveiling the most advanced E-Tech technology in the country. "With these specifications, we are far ahead of any of our competitors and with a battery size of 1.4 KWH, it is almost twice as big as the competition. This makes it possible to drive 80% of time in pure EV mode in city limits."

The Duster hybrid will compete against the hybrid options of Maruti Grand Vitara and Toyota Urban Cruiser Hyryder in the Indian market.

INDIA-EU FTA MUST BRING REGULATORY CERTAINTY TO TRADE

SANGEETA GODBOLE
Sangeeta Godbole is former IRS and Trade negotiator. She studies and teaches Trade and Environment

AS the India-EU Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) moves towards a closure, both sides look forward to certainty and stability to bilateral trade that it is expected to bring. The deal is expected to be announced on Tuesday, but processes like legal scrubbing, signing and most importantly ratification by EU member states may take a couple of years. In the meantime, the EU surprises by bringing in new restricting measures.

EU Industrial Accelerator Act

The EU is notorious for bringing in newer internal regulation that affects third country exporters. Immediately after the deal declaration on January 27, the EU is set to unveil its Industrial Accelerator Act (IAA). A leaked draft of the Act reveals the EU is all set to increase the local content requirement not only in its government procurement, but also in public supported investments. Expectedly, it is packaged in climate neutrality, low-carbon, de-carbonisation, sustainability, resilience and such terminologies.

India has taken a leap-of-faith into the Government Procurement arena in the UK CETA. It has opened up government procurement across fifty-one central government Ministries, their departments and subordinate entities that procure independently. The threshold for goods and services tenders is as low as SDR 450,000, roughly equivalent to Rs 6 crore. Only 20% local content is required for UK businesses to be considered as Indian Class II local suppliers. If the same is stretched to the EU deal, India opens up its huge procurement market, only to be confronted with new restrictive EU conditions even before the BTIA enters into force.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Antonio Costa during the 77th Republic Day Parade in New Delhi | PTI

One can only hope that such huge market access nearing Rs11 lakh crore is being provided mainly because Indian companies also hold ambition to the UK/EU's procurement.

CBAM default values for India

On the CBAM front, apart from the procedural mess, the benchmarks and country-specific default values recently published by the EU are worthy of caution.

The benchmarks for EU steel production are lower than expected. That will drive up EU's Emission Trading System (ETS) prices which currently hover around ₹9,000 per tonne. CBAM fees at the EU borders will be a combination of the benchmarks and country-specific default values declared by the EU. An additional annual punitive mark-up of 10% is also included in the default value calculation taking default values for 2028 at 30% higher than the 2025 value. These could be used by the EU as a bargaining chip in the BTIA negotiations.

India has already notified a draft for steel sector emissions intensity under the CCTS in June 2025. After extensive consultations and audits by BEE, the draft notification indicates industrial installation-wise emissions intensity for 258 industrial units for 2023-24. India must ensure that these emissions calculations are accepted by the EU, rather than the EU's absurd default values. Rough edges between the two measurement systems can be resolved through a joint mechanism.

It must be remembered that CBAM is set to expand to steel and aluminium-intensive downstream products. Around 180 new products which contain steel and aluminium are set to enter the CBAM basket soon. Traceability reporting requirements of such scrap will become an additional nightmare for Indian manufacturers.

New regulation peace clause

FTAs typically last for a very long time. It is also quite difficult to renegotiate any terms. India must therefore, carefully vet the text, and examine upcoming EU Regulation in the light of its market access ambition. Finally, some kind of a permanent peace clause with the EU, regarding new Regulation may actually bring certainty for industry on both sides.

Bradman's baggy green sold for USD 460,000

A Baggy Green cap worn by Australian legend Don Bradman during a home Test series against India in 1947-48 and gifted to opponent player Sriranga Wasudev Sohoni was on Monday sold for USD 460,000 (₹4.2 crore approx) at an auction here. Sohoni's family preserved the cap for the last 75 years, never exhibited publicly, before it was sold.

EXPRESS PLAINER

Carlos Alcaraz smiles after the umpire told him to remove his watch | AFP

WHY WORLD NO. 1s ARE FIGHTING OVER A HEALTH DEVICE

Both Carlos Alcaraz and Aryna Sabalenka, the top players in the men's and women's game today, had a run-in with the Australian Open organisers over WHOOP, a company focused on optimum human performance and health. A look at the fight that has also affected Jannik Sinner...

WHAT'S WHOOP?

In a couple of words, it's a standalone wearable. Unlike most of the smart watches dominating the market, WHOOP is dedicated to giving athletes a better understanding of their health, fitness and performance during matches. It tracks a lot of things including but not limited to recovery score, heart rate variability and strain. It also gives a personalised feedback on users' menstrual cycles. A lot of Indian athletes also wear WHOOP, the subscription-based device. Multiple-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu has been using it for at least a few years.

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Alcaraz, Sinner and Sabalenka are free to use when playing tournaments outside the Grand Slams as the ATP and WTA allow them. But the Majors, for reasons best known to them, have not allowed them. Before Alcaraz and Sinner's last-16 matches, they were asked to remove those devices. WHOOP allows all of them to track their own health and performances indexes, something all elite athletes want to know on a daily basis as they constantly make small, small tweaks. Right now, the Majors have some kind of in-built tracking systems in play and they share with the players but it's not as comprehensive (kilometres run, change of direction, completed sprints and so on).

WHY IS IT BANNED?

Tennis Australia confirmed that they are in ongoing talks to resolve the matter but there's no singular reason as to why it's banned. It's allowed in other tournaments because the Majors are the governing bodies only for the four Slams. One school of thought is that it may give players ranked inside the top-100 an advantage as they are more likely to use these products. They may also strike endorsement deals with these devices.

HOLDER SINNER MARCHES ON, KEYS OUSTED

AFP @ Melbourne

JANNIK Sinner sent an Australian Open statement in rolling into the quarterfinals on Monday but fellow champion Madison Keys was dethroned as Melbourne braced for forecast 45C heat.

Fifth seed Lorenzo Musetti battled stifling conditions to set up a last-eight showdown with Novak Djokovic and six-time major champion Iga Swiatek progressed in rampant fashion. Two-time defending champion Sinner raced to a 6-1, 6-3, 7-6 (72) victory over fellow Italian and close friend Luciano Darderi. The second seed plays Ben Shelton next.

Djokovic and Sinner are on course for a blockbuster last-four showdown. Sinner told Margaret Court Arena, where temperatures hovered around 30C in the early evening: "It was difficult to put the match away, happy I closed it in three sets." Sinner sent down a bumper 19 aces in the match, and said his hard work had paid off. In another clash between compatriots and friends, Jessica Pegula defeated title-holder Keys, 6-3, 6-4. **Results (select; 4th Rd) Men:** Lorenzo Musetti bt Taylor Fritz 6-2, 7-5, 6-4, Jannik Sinner **bt** Luciano Darderi 6-1, 6-3, 7-6 (2), Novak Djokovic **bt** Jakub Mensik w/o. **Women:** Jessica Pegula **bt** Madison Keys 6-3, 6-4, Elena Rybakina bt Elise Mertens 6-1, 6-3, Iga Swiatek **bt** Maddison Inglis 6-0, 6-3

EXPRESS READ

Indian paddlers shine in WTT Star Youth meet

DOHA: Indian paddlers enjoyed a rich haul of 10 medals, including four gold, at the 2026 WTT Star Youth Contender and Feeder events in Doha, highlighted by Ahona Ray's top-podium finish in the U-15 girls' category. U15 boys' pair of Akash Rajavelu and Rishaan Chattopadhyay also clinched the gold medal.

Qatar's Sheikh Joaan elected to lead OCA

TASHKENT (UZBEKISTAN): Qatar scored a win in Olympic politics, with the emirate also aiming to host the 2036 Summer Games. Olympic Council of Asia members elected Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al Thani as their president to complete the term in office of Randir Singh, who stepped down for health reasons.

VINTAGE SURYA FINDS FORM JUST BEFORE BIG SHOW

Skipper puts behind his lean patch with consecutive fifties against New Zealand

82 His unbeaten 82 in the second T20I was the first time he had scored 50 or more in a T20I since a 75 against Bangladesh in October 2024.

27 He has hit 27 boundaries in this series, averaging one every 3.14 balls

171 He tops the run-scoring charts with 171, 19 more than Abhishek Sharma

After a poor 2025, India captain Suryakumar Yadav is in red-hot form ahead of T20 World Cup

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN @ Chennai

IT'S time to state the obvious. The Indian team are the favourites to retain the T20 World Cup. In the months leading up to the bash, they looked proper challengers to at least reach the final. Now, after their clinical, systemic dissection of New Zealand in India in varied conditions over the last week, the final should be their minimal ambition.

Over the last seven days, they have again bared their teeth in a show of remarkable strength. Sure, teams have constantly used T20 cricket to display naked aggression but the Black Caps have had no answers to the kind of brute hitting India have subjected them to. Abhishek Sharma is doing with the bat what Jasprit Bumrah has done with the ball for over a decade. Break games open early doors. His assault and understanding of the field restrictions — coupled with Ishan Kishan's devil may care attitude at No. 3 — has meant this Indian batting unit is always on turbocharge. Granted, there may be days when such a hedonistic, care-free batting will see them be 3/10 after one over but over the long run, this is the way to play the game. They used to suffer when an earlier management saw T20Is as shortened ODIs. This one sees T20Is as a separate sport in itself.

When they began the white-ball season Down Under, there were quiet whispers over Suryakumar Yadav. The first Indian unicorn in this format had forgotten the grammar of the sport he had at least co-authored. 7 n.o, 47 n.o, 0, 5, 12, 1, 39 n.o, 1, 24, 20, 12, 5, 12 and 5 were his returns since the beginning of the Asia Cup last September.

India had a real problem in their hands. Would they jettison the captain so close to the World Cup? Considering there were some watercooler talk concerning his wrists, it wasn't an outlandish suggestion. And, then, relief. Freedom. First, it came in fits and starts. Then, the floodgates opened. Scores of 32 (off 22), 82 n.o (off 37) and 57 n.o (off 26) has given the team management and the leadership group belief that their No. 4 is back and firing adding further ballast to a batting group already high on a lot of minerals. What changed for the captain? Like most batters, some time in the middle, some luck and a batter at the other end going at 100 miles per hour. When the skipper walked in at 2/6 in the 2mnd over when chasing 209 in the second T20I, he was under the pump. But he had time, a target in front of him. That was what he wanted to buy himself some time. He had some lucky escapes in the first over. One rising delivery didn't go to a fielder, another moving delivery missed the outside edge. At the other end, Kishan not only took strike but dealt in boundaries.

That partnership, till the end of the powerplay was worth 69 in 4.5 overs but Yadav's contribution was 8. It's a cliche but it's a cliche for a reason; whenever batters go through a slump, one of the first diagnosis is 'needs to spend more time in the middle'. Stretching back to the beginning of 2025, he had faced 15 balls or more in an innings only twice in 19 innings before the start of this series. So, it was a question of giving himself time. Once he had sussed out the pitch and the conditions, he opened his scoring avenues as he began accessing areas behind square on the leg-side. Those elastic wrists came into play. One particular Zak Foulkes over went for 4, 4, wide, 4, 4, 6, 2 with the majority runs coming in the V between third man and long leg.

It was more of the same a few days later in Guwahati. This was another Yadav of old knock. Is he truly back? You need more than a few knocks to show that but these were giant steps after a meagre last 12 months. Continue like this in Visakhapatnam and Thiruvananthapuram and India may well book a few hotel rooms in in Ahmedabad from March 6 to 9.

Tilak to join India squad before WC warm-up tie

India's India's dependable No. 3 Tilak Varma is yet to regain full match fitness and has been left out of the squad for the final two T20Is against New Zealand at Visakhapatnam and T'puram. Tilak, who is recovering from an abdominal surgery, is at the Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru. He was expected to join the squad for the last two games but his replacement, Shreyas Iyer, has been asked to stay on with the squad. "India batter Tilak Varma has resumed physical training and is making steady progress with his rehabilitation at the BCCI CoE," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said.

T20 WC WATCH

Hope to lead West Indies; Sampson, Joseph added to squad

Shai Hope, who missed the Afghanistan series due to SA20, will be back as WI captain

ST JOHN'S (ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA): Shai Hope will lead two-time title winners West Indies in next month's T20 World Cup with the Caribbean squad also featuring rookie batter Quentin Sampson and pacer Shamar Joseph. Former skipper Jason Holder, Romario Shepherd and Rovman Powell also returned to the West Indies' side after missing their three-match series against Afghanistan — which they lost 1-2 — due to T20 commitments. Hope did not feature in the series against Afghanistan as he was busy playing in the recently concluded SA20. West Indies will take on South Africa in an away three-match T20I series to bolster their preparations for the T20 World Cup from January 27-31.

Squad: Shai Hope (c & wk), Johnson Charles (wk), Roston Chase, Matthew Forde, Shimron Hetmyer, Jason Holder, Akeal Hossein, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Gudakesh Motie, Rovman Powell, Sherfane Rutherford, Quentin Sampson, Jayden Seales, Romario Shepherd.

Focus shifts to WC now: Gavaskar

NEW DELHI: The legendary Sunil Gavaskar says the ongoing T20I series against New Zealand should be seen as an early warm-up as India are not taking anything lightly as they prepare in right earnest to defend their T20 World Cup title. Gavaskar underlined India's depth as the hosts took an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series with a scintillating eight-wicket win in Guwahati on Sunday. "This series is like an appetizer; the main course begins from the 7th of February," Gavaskar said while speaking on JioHotstar show. "Having won the series, the focus now is on defending the World Cup title. These players are preparing thoroughly. Some of them haven't even had the chance to bat, so they are working on range-hitting, timing, rhythm, bat flow and pick-up. It shows the focus of this team; they are not taking the World Cup lightly and not taking anything for granted."

Gavaskar said India's depth and self-belief were evident in the way they have been winning matches comfortably. "India has complete confidence in themselves. When you have players like Rinku Singh and Hardik Pandya batting down the order, and they haven't even needed to bat in two matches, and India is still winning comfortably, it tells you the kind of caliber this team has," he said.

WPL: Could this be the year of Gujarat Giants?

GOMESH S @ Chennai

THE last 48 hours have been remarkable for franchise teams that don orange jerseys. On Sunday afternoon, Perth Scorchers cruised past Sydney Sixers to win their sixth Big Bash League title. A few hours later, about half a world away, Tristan Stubbs led Sunrisers Eastern Cape to their third SA20 trophy after an enthralling contest against Pretoria Capitals.

There is another orange team, camped in Vadodara, hoping to replicate the same in the next ten days — Gujarat Giants. Their all-rounder and former White Ferns captain Sophie Devine hopes so as well. "I certainly hope so," Devine says with a beaming smile. "It's obviously a great colour orange. Obviously I spent a fair bit of time playing in the Orange kit, but yeah, I certainly hope so. I think the Perth Scorchers men did a fantastic job. Obviously the women made it to the final as well and hopefully the Gujarat Giants can be there as well," added Devine, who led Perth Scorchers to WBBL final before they lost to Hobart Hurricanes.

Giants, meanwhile, kickstarted the campaign with two wins before losing momentum. They ended up on the wrong side of the result thrice in a row before an all-round show from Devine got them back on winning track against UP Warriorz. It took some adjustments to understand the low and slow surface in Vadodara after the high-scoring games in DY Patil, but Giants are now very much in the play-off race.

Devine felt that in Vadodara, batters had to give some time to settle before accelerating. "Everyone has to be able to adjust and adapt to the different conditions. Obviously, they have been pretty different from what we experienced in Navi Mumbai. It is about how we can make those adjustments as quickly as possible and what we think is going to be effective on these types of wickets. I think we've seen across the games here in Baroda that you have to give yourself a little bit more time with the bat and it's not probably going to be quite as high scoring as some of the totals we saw at DY Patil Stadium," Devine explained, before adding, "It's certainly a lot nicer as a bowler in Baroda. The option to bowl obviously a few more variations and stay on the stumps, I think, that's been a key message throughout this whole tournament, regardless of the venue, is to keep the stumps in play."

Sophie Devine has been a key performer for Gujarat Giants | BCCI

Devine has been their star performer, leading both batting and bowling charts: 199 runs at 160.48 strike rate and 11 wickets at 16.09 average. However, there have been some crucial contributions from Indian players. Bharti Fulmali's consistency earned her the India recall, and Kashvee Gautam has shown why she is one of the promising all-round talents in the country.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

Nat Sciver-Brunt hits first-ever ton of WPL

VADODARA: Nat Sciver-Brunt (100 not out) hit the first-ever century of Women's Premier League history in its fourth edition as dominant Mumbai Indians beat Royal Challengers Bengaluru by 15 runs, despite Richa Ghosh's whirlwind 90, here on Monday. In a must-win game, defending champions Mumbai piled up 199 for four. But, despite reducing RCB to 35/5, Richa took them 184/9.

MBSG vs KBFC in ISL opener

CHENNAI: 2025 Indian Super League champions Mohun Bagan Super Giant will face Kerala Blasters FC in the first match of the truncated 2025/26 season on Saturday, February 14, as per the tentative schedule released by the All India Football Federation. Days after meeting four interested parties over this season's media rights, the AIFF had released the document which contained the clarifications to response to the bidders' queries. The schedule remains subject to change, basis inputs received from the participating ISL clubs.

Hendrickx helps Kalinga Lancers lift HIL title

TANMAY DAS @ Bhubaneswar

DOUBLE strike by dependable drag-flicker Alexander Hendrickx powered Vedanta Kalinga Lancers to a 3-2 win over Ranchi Royals in the Hockey India League final here at the Kalinga Stadium on Monday. Earlier, Amandeep Lakra scored a brace as Hyderabad Toofans defeated HIL GC 4-3 to finish third in the league.

Lancers started quite aggressively and earned a penalty corner in the fourth minute, which was duly converted by Hendrickx to give him team a 1-0 lead. Royals' Hundal Araijeet Singh, however, scored a field goal in the ninth minute to make it 1-1.

The home team dominated the second quarter and was rewarded with six short corners. In the 25th minute, Royals' goalkeeper failed to put away Hendrickx's powerful dragflick and Dilpreet Singh made no mistake by slamming home a goal. A couple of minutes later Hendrickx scored his second goal of the match to give his team a 3-1 lead.

After the change of sides, it was a challenge between Lancers' defense and Royals' attack.

Kalinga Lancers celebrate after winning the HIL title on Monday | DEBADATTA MALLICK

Barca top La Liga as Yamal hits stunner against Oviedo

AGENCIES @ Barcelona

BARCELONA reclaimed top spot in La Liga with a 3-0 win over Real Oviedo on Sunday, thanks to goals from Dani Olmo, Raphinha and an acrobatic Lamine Yamal effort.

After Real Madrid beat Villarreal on Saturday to take pole position overnight, the Catalans edged a point ahead again. Earlier Atletico Madrid eased to a 3-0 win over Mallorca to strengthen their position in third and move eight points behind Barca.

Lamine Yamal scores for Barcelona FC against Real Oviedo | AFP

Diego Simeone's Atletico Madrid capitalised on Villarreal's loss with a solid home victory to go three points clear of the Yellow Submarine.

Mental health experts argue that mental well-being must be cultivated early, long before crisis strikes. Training young people to build resilience to manage stress and value emotional balance can help them respond more healthily to setbacks later in life

TRIGGERS FOR MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

- Mental health challenges are often triggered by a combination of biological, psychological, and social factors
- Common triggers include academic pressure, job-related stress, financial loss, relationship conflicts, bereavement, and major life transitions
- Traumatic experiences such as accidents, abuse, or sudden illness can also precipitate emotional distress
- Ongoing stressors like poor work–life balance, sleep deprivation, and social isolation increase vulnerability
- Genetic predisposition plays a role, determining why some individuals develop anxiety or depression after setbacks while others cope better
- Lack of emotional support and delayed professional help can intensify these triggers, turning temporary distress into long-term mental health problems

TREATMENT OPTIONS & NEW THERAPIES

1. Mental health treatment is tailored on a case-by-case basis, combining medication, psychological therapies, and, where needed, social work interventions
2. Newer medicines have significantly reduced distressing side-effects seen with older drugs, allowing patients to function better in daily life without excessive sedation
3. Psychological approaches such as cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT), and mindfulness-based therapies are effective for specific conditions and often enhance outcomes when used alongside medication, including in disorders like OCD
4. Advanced treatments such as transcranial magnetic stimulation offer a patient-friendly alternative to electroconvulsive therapy
5. Ketamine-assisted therapy shows promise for acute depression, while online therapy has expanded access, especially after the pandemic

MENTAL WELL-BEING SHOULD BE PART OF YOUR FITNESS

UNNIKRISHNAN S @ T'Puram

CHURNING miles on treadmills in crowded gyms, following diet plans to lose weight, and keeping up with wellness app alerts that remind you to drink more water and walk a little extra – this the daily fitness routine for many. Yet, beneath this visible pursuit of physical health, it is the emotional fatigue that often goes unacknowledged. As anxiety, chronic stress, and low moods quietly settle into daily routines, they are frequently dismissed as temporary phases rather than health concerns that demand attention..

Mental health today is spoken more openly than ever before. Social media reels, motivational talks and public conversations have helped reduce some of the silence surrounding emotional distress.

But psychiatrists point out that this growing awareness has not translated into sustained care or healthier coping habits. "The way we ensure physical well-being — going to the gym, following diet plans — similar awareness is emerging for mental well-being. But this awareness rarely translates into passionate, consistent application," notes Dr CJ John, senior psychiatrist at Medical Trust Hospital in Kochi.

Emotional crises triggered by academic pressure, financial loss or personal setbacks are often treated as isolated disruptions rather than warning signals. Many continue to wait for time to resolve distress, delaying professional help until symptoms begin to interfere visibly with work, relationships or sleep. This gap between knowing and acting leaves mental well-being fragile, even in otherwise high-functioning individuals.

The challenge lies not only in treating mental illness but in redefining how society understands mental health itself. "There is no health without mental health," Dr John says, underscoring how behavioural patterns and emotional resilience shape both psychological and physical outcomes.

While Kerala's mental health morbidity is estimated at around 12%, he cautions that the absence of illness does not automatically translate into mental well-being. Many people who fall outside diagnostic categories may still struggle with poor coping skills, unresolved stress, or a lack of emotional fulfilment.

Mental health experts argue that mental well-being must be cultivated early, long before crisis strikes. Training young people to build resilience to manage stress and value emotional balance can help them respond more healthily to setbacks later in life.

True mental well-being, he emphasises, is not limited to surviving difficult moments but extends to the ability to enjoy everyday life and contribute positively to others. "Mental well-being is not only about managing crises. Living happily is also mental well-being. The true index of mental well-being is the ability to enjoy each moment," says Dr John.

> *Mental well-being is not only about managing crises. Living happily is also mental well-being. The true index of mental well-being is the ability to enjoy each moment*
>
> Dr CJ John, Kochi

As conversations around mental health continue to grow louder, the real test lies in whether they lead to meaningful change, seeking the right help, addressing distress early, and treating emotional health with the same seriousness as physical fitness. Until then, the pursuit of wellness will remain incomplete, measured more in steps walked than in peace of mind achieved.

MYTH BUSTERS

Myth: Mental health problems aren't real illnesses
Fact: Mental illnesses are medical conditions, just like diabetes or asthma. Brain scans show physical differences in brain activity and structure in people with depression or OCD compared to those without.

Dr Jitha G
Specialist, psychiatry and behavioural medicine, KIMSHEALTH Thiruvananthapuram

Myth: Only weak people struggle with mental health
Fact: Anyone can face mental health challenges. It has nothing to do with willpower or being weak. It is a complex mix of genetics, biology, and environment. Many of the world's most successful athletes and leaders manage mental health conditions. Seeking help is a sign of courage

Myth: If you have a mental illness, you can't work or live normally
Fact: With the right treatment and support, the vast majority of people with mental health conditions lead highly productive, successful, and "normal" lives.

Myth: Children can't have mental health issues
Fact: Symptoms can start very young. Half of all mental health conditions begin during childhood. Children and teens can experience anxiety, depression, or other conditions. Early intervention is the best way to ensure a healthy adulthood.

From wagging tails to gut microbes, how dogs reshape our mental health

UNNIKRISHNAN S @ T'Puram

OWNING a dog has long been celebrated for the happiness it brings – wagging tails at the door, playful companionship, and the comfort of a loyal friend. Now, scientists say the joy may run deeper than emotions alone. A new study from Japan suggests that dogs influence their owners' mental health — especially that of teenagers — by sharing microscopic organisms that reshape the human microbiome, the trillions of bacteria living in and on our bodies. These microbial shifts appear to promote empathy and prosocial behaviour, adding a new dimension to the age-old relationship between humans and dogs.

For many parents, the benefits of dog ownership are visible in everyday life. "My son became more outgoing after we brought home Ginger, a labrador," says Anitha Ravi, a mother of two in Kochi. "He talks more, plays with friends, and even seems calmer during exams. We thought it was just the bond with Ginger."

Aravind Nair, a father in Thiruvananthapuram, shares a similar experience. "My daughter was shy and withdrawn. After we adopted Coco, a native breed, she started taking him for walks, meeting neighbours, and even volunteering at school events. It's as if the dog opened a door to her social world."

These anecdotes echo the findings of researchers at Azabu University, who analysed oral microbiome samples from 13-year-olds with and without dogs at home. While both groups showed similar diversity of microbes, the composition differed: dog-owning teens had specific bacteria linked to prosocial behaviour. When these microbes were transplanted into laboratory mice, the animals displayed more social interaction, sniffing and engaging with cage mates more often.

EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

"The most interesting finding from this study is that bacteria promoting prosociality, or empathy, were discovered in the microbiomes of adolescent children who keep dogs," says study leader Takefumi Kikusui in a statement.

The Japanese team's work builds on earlier studies showing that people raised with dogs score higher on measures of companionship and social support. Other research has found differences in gut microbiomes between dog owners and non-owners. The gut microbiome is increasingly recognised as a key player in mental health, influencing mood, resilience, and social connect.

"Dogs influence their human masters' gut microbiome through increased microbial diversity. Dogs bring in environmental microbes into the home from various sources such as soil and grass," says Dr Sanjay D, nodal officer for One Health and deputy director of animal husbandry department in Kerala.

While the benefits are compelling, experts caution against over-generalising. Dr Sabu Thomas, director of the Centre of Excellence in Microbiome, Thiruvananthapuram, emphasises the need for a holistic approach. "Studies on this subject should follow a One Health approach, since humans, animals, and the environment are all interconnected. Human health can improve when probiotic bacteria are transferred from dogs, and the microbiome does play a role in well-being. However, a single study cannot prove that all pet owners will benefit in the same way. We should avoid generalising the findings and remain cautious about the risks of pathogen sharing."

This perspective highlights the complexity of microbial exchanges. While dogs may introduce beneficial bacteria, they can also carry pathogens. The balance between health benefits and risks depends on factors such as hygiene, veterinary care, and environmental conditions.

Dr Sanjay underscores the importance of caution, especially in the context of climate change. "There is also a risk of contracting zoonotic diseases. It is important that dogs are dewormed and vaccinated. The risk aspects should not be underemphasized."

CAUTIONARY ASPECTS STUDY DID NOT ADDRESS

- Zoonotic disease risks
- Climate change impact
- Generalisation limits (Findings were based on a small sample of adolescents)
- One Health perspective (The interconnectedness of humans, animals, and environment)
- Long-term effects
- Hygiene and veterinary care (Practical aspects like deworming, vaccination, and household hygiene)

NEWS CAPSULES

Researchers find natural molecule in body that has stress-reducing role

RESEARCHERS have found that a naturally occurring molecule in the body plays a stress-reducing role, a discovery which they said could lead to new drugs and treatment for metabolic disorders and ageing. Researchers from The University of Queensland looked at microRNAs, which bind to genes and prevent them from being over-activated. The study published in the journal Nature Communications investigated damage to mitochondria – the energy powerhouse of a cell that makes muscles function, neurons to fire, among other processes in the body. "MicroRNAs have many different functions, but this is the first time it has been shown that they regulate mitochondrial stress pathways and prevent the spread of stress signals to other cells and tissues throughout the body," said author Steven Zuryn, a molecular geneticist at the University of Queensland.

"Damage to the mitochondria accrues over time and is closely associated with metabolic disorders and diseases of ageing including neurodegeneration, cancer and diabetes, as well as ageing itself," Zuryn said. The study looked at a specific microRNA, called 'miR-71', in Caenorhabditis elegans worm models or C. elegans. Zuryn said the microRNAs lower chronic stress in the body and protect cells. "Our research implies that we could design highly specific and deliverable microRNAs that target these same genes in humans, thereby reducing the intensity and spread of damaging chronic stress signals. We're not necessarily aiming to develop an anti-ageing drug, but an understanding of the deep underlying mechanisms of these processes may one day lead to this outcome," he said. *PTI*

Wildfire smoke in third trimester linked with higher autism risk

Exposure to wildfire smoke during the final months of pregnancy may raise the risk of an autism diagnosis in the child, a California analysis found. Researchers looked at more than two lakh births in Southern California from 2006 to 2014, including 3,356 in which children were diagnosed with autism by age five. They found that expectant mothers exposed to one to five days of any wildfire smoke particles during the third trimester had children with an elevated risk of autism compared to those not exposed.

During wildfires, burning vegetation and buildings release toxic metals and other pollutants that can be inhaled, the researchers noted in a report published in Environmental Science & Technology. The strongest association was in mothers exposed to more than 10 days of wildfire smoke during the final trimester, they found. In that group, children had a 23% higher risk of autism diagnoses compared to those whose mothers were never exposed to wildfire smoke while pregnant.

Risk factors for mothers of children diagnosed with autism included that they were older, in their first pregnancy, or had pre-pregnancy diabetes or obesity. The researchers say their study cannot prove that prenatal wildfire exposure causes autism, but it adds to growing evidence of the adverse impact of air pollutants on development of the fetal brain. "As climate change increases the frequency and intensity of wildfires in many parts of the world, understanding their relationship with autism is important to being able to develop preventive policy and interventions," study leader Mostafijur Rahman of Tulane University said. *Agencies*

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TUESDAY

DAY'S DIARY

Fire in Apollo 1

On this day in 1967, a flash fire tragedy struck on the launch pad at Cape Kennedy during a preflight test for Apollo 204 (AS-204)

THE MOON MISSION

Apollo was to be the first crewed flight to the moon. With the launch planned on February 21, the astronauts were conducting a key test on the launch pad

ROOT CAUSE

An investigation indicated that the fire started from an electrical arc caused by a frayed or poorly insulated wire near the lower left section of the cabin

FALLEN HEROS

The launch pad fire killed astronauts Virgil 'Gus' Grissom, Edward H White II, and Roger B Chaffee, who were conducting a mock countdown

Happenings in and around Bengaluru

PG 2

Bengaluru FC captain Sunil Chhetri 'dropped by' a talk which gave a glimpse into the early days of the club & the sweat behind building the much sought-after football team

BFC pulled out all the tricks for fans to build support at its inception with Bengalureans' lingering loyalty to the city's iconic football clubs ITI and HAL

PIC: @BENGALURUFC

A WINNING BLUEPRINT

MAHIMA NAGARAJU

ON a quiet bar on Sunday, hours before Bengalureans start to file in and the weekend rush begins, Sunil Chhetri made a virtual appearance to surprise a small group of people gathered to listen to Kunaal Majgaonkar, the former head of content and social media at JSW sports – part of Bengaluru FC's early days – reveal what went into making the team. Greeted by a surprised silence and then loud cheers, Chhetri said, "Good things happen when you have lots of good people, and when it happens consistently – you get magic. That's what BFC is."

Majgoankar took the audience to the beginnings of BFC in July 2013 when it was established by businessman Parth Jindal. With the season set to start in September, they had their work cut out for them. "By the time we had a football club, all the other 11 had signed the best players except Chhetri because he could afford to wait till the last hour to decide where he was going. The other players in the team had injury concerns or bad boy reps," he said.

Ashley Westwood, the then coach, appears as a driving force, whipping the team into shape, imposing strict rules and fines (chosen by the team itself), the entire team living together in an apartment complex in an area Majgaonkar calls 'the armpit of Bengaluru' to make sure the players would not have the energy to bar-hop after practice. "Westwood called everyone and said we're neither the most talented team nor the most expensive, but we're going to be the most disciplined, and that is something that will forever remain the base," said Majgaonkar.

It wasn't just the players held to these standards but the staff too, as Majgaonkar recalled, "Ashley said 'brown bread, broccoli, chicken breast, brown rice, everything else goes out.' Which seemed okay, until he asked the staff to follow it too," he laughed.

While Chhetri may have been the star player drawing crowds, ahead of the team's first game against Mohun Bagan Westwood wanted to drop him because he had arrived from the national camp overweight. To navigate this tricky situation, he turned to his mentor and legendary football manager Alex Ferguson, who told him that it's the right call, but only if he calls Chhetri to his room and tells him why, which is exactly what Westwood did. "Chhetri could've easily said there are 11 other clubs that will sign me on, but he said he would earn his spot in this team," recalls Majgaonkar, adding, "It was a pivotal moment because it sent a message to the other boys that you could be Chhetri and not just walk into the team. It was like a switch flicked. You could see the boys just changed their mindset, their attitude, the way they turned up for everything." BFC would go on to win the I-league (top level at the time) that year – 2013.

THE BLUE BASE

The rest is history with BFC getting onto a winning streak. However, one of the challenges was trying to build support for BFC at its inception with Bengalureans' lingering loyalty to the city's iconic football clubs ITI and HAL. This would continue until a much-loved 2019 match between legends of those teams and BFC. But right from the start, his approach was to build connections with fans that felt genuine, starting with the first 12 who showed up for BFC's first open-practice session. Majgaonkar recalled, "We had twice the number of players than fans that day. I thought it had backfired. Except, the boys were good about it – they pulled out all the tricks and put on a show for them, signed autographs, asked them about their lives. All of a sudden, it was fantastic. We held on to these 12, who went on to tell their 12. The next open-training session, we had 50, then 300. Two years ago, we had 1,000."

This continued with heartfelt social media interactions that turned into viral moments, a silly account made for the stadium's resident dog, Dimi, whom the team rescued and writing that gave fans an inside look into their favourite players – at the core of it all was telling a compelling story. "Let's give people these little insights – what happens in a dressing room when there are no cameras? Has someone missed the birth of a child but scored a goal today? How do we put all those stories out?" asked Majgaonkar.

Beyond the blues, the talk gave a sneak-peek into the making of the matchmakers.

Star player Sunil Chhetri in action during one of the practice sessions | ANI

COURTESY: BOOKMYSHOW LIVE

HAPPY ENDINGS!

Linkin Park's co-lead vocalist Mike Shinoda during the rock band's India debut in the city, giving Bengalureans a core memory to cherish

'It's all about RECIPROCATION'

Mental health advocate-interior designer Miheeka Daggubati shares her philosophy on holistic health, lifestyle and balancing life with actor-producer Rana Daggubati

RESHMI CHAKRAVORTY

FOLLOWING a successful Bengaluru edition, *The Wellness Fair* moved to Hyderabad for a three-day experience. Curated in collaboration with Mudita Tribe, founded by **Miheeka Daggubati**, the fair celebrated everyday wellbeing through simple, mindful choices. *CE* caught up with Daggubati to talk about wellness and life with **Rana Daggubati**, wrapping up an enriching and engaging fair.

Edited excerpts:

How's 2026 shaping up?
Lovely! I'm keeping things slow and intentional this year – focusing on what aligns with my goals and where I put my energy. I want to maintain intentionality rather than just hustling. We're expanding Mudita; I'm also continuing my interior design firm and ArtConnect, which curates cultural initiatives. It's about learning and expanding knowledge in these areas.

Coming from two prominent families – the Bajajs and the Daggubatis – how do you balance these worlds?
Both families are incredibly grounded. Despite appearances, everyone is kind, live-and-let-live, and encouraging of who you truly are. For me, Rana's parents are as close as my own, and it's all about reciprocation.

How do you approach fashion & lifestyle?
I don't follow trends. I wear what feels comfortable and reflects my personality. It depends on my mood or vibe for the day – whether I want to feel cute, sharp, or casual – but I keep it simple and go with the flow.

What's one thing you've learned from your partner Rana?
His work ethic paired with humility is inspiring. He's respectful, non-judgmental and stays grounded no matter his success. You just get up and do your work without worrying about others' lives, that's a valuable lesson.

Any habits of his that bother you?
Not really. In a relationship, you accept each other as you are. We've reached a place where we understand each other's quirks and strengths, it just works seamlessly.

How do you personally view mental health in daily life?
It's all about small, mindful practices – exercise, gratitude, appreciating little moments, and slowing down. Being present while eating, spending quality time with family and taking time to unwind is so important. In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to burn out if you don't balance hustle with holistic care. For long-term wellness, mental well-being is crucial. I do a lot of yoga and enjoy slow mornings. I like taking time to relax, eat meals with family, read, listen to music and just enjoy simple routines.

QUICK TAKES

Morning person or night?
I'm a morning person, but I like a calm start. I prefer waking up early to unwind rather than rush through my morning.

Beach, mountains, or forest?
Nature, in any form. I'd choose it over the city any day.

Favourite travel spots?
Italy and Goa. I love exploring new cultures and ways of life.

Last book or podcast you enjoyed?
I'm reading *The Four Agreements* by the author Don Miguel Ruiz. I'm not much of a podcast person because of my short attention span.

CITY READ

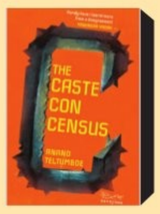
Science exhibition marks R-Day

Nisarga Brundavana apartment association organised a science exhibition to mark the 77th Republic Day on Monday. The programme brought together children who showcased innovative and simple science experiments. A drawing competition was also arranged for the children of Pragathi Trust to encourage creativity and self-expression. Trophies and certificates were presented to the participants at the event, which aimed to create an inclusive environment where children from various backgrounds could learn and interact, while celebrating the spirit of the Republic Day. Twell Magazine founder Deepak Tater Jain and social activist Sabarinathan R were the chief guests at the event.

Cultural conference held

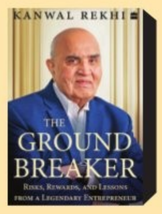
The Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) and VishwakiranNambi dance company, (VNDC) in collaboration with Mount Carmel College, presented the NrityaSankalpah 1.0, a national conference recently. It was inaugurated by the Shubha Dhananjay, president, Karnataka SangeethaNrithya Academy along with the guest of honours Pardeep Kumar, ICCR Zonal Officer and VishwakiranNambi, founder and director of VNDC. The conference centred around the theme of dance as a form of expression and emphasised the collective effort to reimagine dance as beyond performance. The academic segment included a total of 22 research papers from the state.

BOOK NOOK



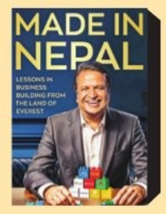
The Caste Con Census
By Anand Teltumbde

This book examines the politics and implications of conducting a caste census in contemporary India. Moving through history, policy, and power, the book questions who benefits from visibility, who resists it and why counting can be political.



The Ground Breaker
by Kanwal Rekhi

A memoir of entrepreneurship that tracks risk, reinvention, and the choices that shape a modern founder's life. The book looks at lessons from a long career in startups and investing, asking what it really takes to build at scale.



Made in Nepal
by Binod Chaudhary

This book is a business memoir that traces one entrepreneur's rise from local trade to a regional company, blending practical lessons with cultural observation.

The Award
by Matthew Pearl

A writer's unexpected relationship with a celebrated author brings literary ambition and authenticity into uneasy conversation. Set against the competitive circuits of prize culture, the novel quietly explores authority, influence, and what it means to earn a place in the canon.

HERE COMES THE SUN

Over 1,000 participants perform Surya Namaskar at the celebration of Ratha Saptami, the Sun-God's birthday and northward journey, organised by Sri Pathanjali Yoga Shikshana Samithi at Rani Abbakka playground, Mahalakshmipuram | **VINOD KUMAR T**

QUICKFIX

FRENCH FRIES & GOBI PAKODA

INGREDIENTS

- **Potatoes:** 3–4, cut into sticks
- **Gram flour (besan):** ¾ cup
- **Spice mix (salt, chilli powder, turmeric, garam masala):** To taste
- **Cauliflower florets:** 1 small head
- **Oil:** For deep frying

METHOD

- Soak potato sticks in cold water for 15–20 minutes, drain and pat dry.
- Toss potatoes with a little besan and spice mix, deep fry until golden and crisp.
- Blanch cauliflower briefly, then drain well.
- Mix the remaining besan with the spice mix. Add some water to make a thick batter and coat the florets.
- Deep fry the cauliflower until crunchy and serve hot.

Contributed by **Satya,** Hyderabad

NOWSTREAMING

REGIONAL

GUSTAAKH ISHQ (Hindi)

Seeking to learn the art of perfect poetry, Nawabuddin turns to Aziz, a retired Urdu poet, for guidance. However, he finds himself romantically entangled when he falls for his mentor's daughter.

Cast: Fatima Sana Shaikh, Vijay Varma, Sharib Hashmi

- **Watch on:** JioHotstar

CHEEKATILO (Telugu)

Cheekatilo is a gripping thriller that exposes the buried horrors of patriarchy, power and truth. When crime anchor Sandhya's best friend is found dead under suspicious circumstances, she embarks on a dangerous investigation that collides with a dark past. As secrets unravel, Sandhya must face her trauma and rise as a fearless voice for the silenced.

Cast: Sobhita Dhulipala, Aamani, Esha Chawla

- **Watch on:** Amazon Prime Video

FOREIGN

A BIG BOLD BEAUTIFUL JOURNEY (English)

Through a surprising twist of fate, single strangers Sarah and David get to relive important moments from their respective pasts, illuminating how they got to where they are in the present.

Cast: Colin Farrell, Margot Robbie, Calahan Skogman

- **Watch on:** Netflix

SUBSCRIPTION

Netflix:	₹ 199/month
Prime Video:	₹ 299/month
Jio Cinema:	₹ 999/year
Disney+ Hotstar:	₹ 899/year
Zee5:	₹ 699/year
Viki Rakuten:	₹ 299/month
Aha:	₹ 699/year
SonyLIV:	₹ 299/month

FITBIT

WHY WALKING INTO GYM MAY FEEL HARD AND HOW TO EASE INTO IT

For most people, the hardest part of going to the gym is often not the workout. It's the intimidation of walking through that door, either you are going for the first time or returning after a long break. This feeling can be referred to as 'gymtimidation'.

WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO GYM INTIMIDATION

- Pausing at the entrance and feeling unsure about belonging in the space
- Fear of using equipment incorrectly
- Worry about being judged for body type or fitness level
- Feeling discouraged by comparisons with past fitness levels
- Standing out in an unfamiliar, performance-driven environment

What often surprises people is that this fear has very little to do with motivation. Most people who walk into a gym genuinely want to improve their health. What they're really searching for is a sense of safety and reassurance.

HOW THE GYM ENVIRONMENT MAY AFFECT CONFIDENCE

- Loud music, crowded weight areas, and mirror-heavy layouts can increase self-consciousness
- Limited interaction with staff may make beginners hesitant to ask for help
- Lack of personal space can heighten discomfort and anxiety
- Simple gestures like welcoming greetings and non-judgmental assistance can help people feel at ease

ROLE OF GUIDANCE IN REDUCING ANXIETY

- Clear instructions help reduce confusion in spaces with many machines and options
- Support from trainers or structured beginner plans provides direction
- Knowing what to do and why to do it lowers mental stress and hesitation. Without guidance, gyms can feel overwhelming and intimidating.

MANAGINGEXPECTATIONS IN EARLY WEEKS

- Physical results are not immediately visible
- Self-doubt and comparison are common during this phase
- Attending sessions consistently is a meaningful success
- Missing an occasional session does not equal failure
- Habit-building is more important than testing willpower

WHY STARTING SMALL IS IMPORTANT

- Beginning with three days of exercise per week is sufficient in early stages
- The initial goal should be building a habit, not high training intensity
- Walking, cycling, stretching, or repeating the same simple routine builds familiarity
- Familiarity leads to comfort, comfort supports consistency and consistency leads to progress

By Karan Singh, fitness expert, cult – a fitness and wellness platform

WHATWHENWHYWHERE

Watch It, Feel It!

Catch the screening of *I Wish* (2011), a tale of two brothers chasing a miracle and hoping to bring their family together. Filled with childhood wonder, friendship and quiet emotions, the event offers a cosy cinematic journey you don't want to miss!

WHEN: January 27, 7.45pm **WHERE:** Underline Center, Indiranagar
DETAILS: underline.center

Step Up

Join a high-energy night featuring disco jockey NY with non-stop Bollywood music and a buzzing dance floor. The event offers great ambience along with tasty appetisers, cocktails and mocktails. Free entry is available early, with paid tickets later in the night.

WHEN: January 27, 8pm onwards
WHERE: Gsuper Club, Koramangala
DETAILS: highape.com

Royal Taste

Indulge in a culinary experience that pays homage to a cuisine celebrated for its grandeur, indulgence, and closely guarded secrets. Highlights include paneer tikka piyazi, badami paneer korma, bagara baingan, murgh ki chaap and gosht dum biryani, accompanied by traditional pudina ki roomali.

WHEN: January 27, 12pm onwards
WHERE: Terracotta, Vivanta Bengaluru, Whitefield
CALL: 73491 41123

Classical Move

Witness the magic of classical dance as you watch Prastuthi – a Kuchipudi solo by **Pragnya Thamire**. Take your dance-loving friends and watch each move flow in sync with the music.

WHEN: January 27, 7.30pm
WHERE: Medai – The Stage, Koramangala
DETAILS: theticket9.com

Knife-ly Done

Unleash your inner artist at this Knife Painting Workshop, where creativity meets coffee in a colourful way! You'll learn the art of using palette knives to create stunning textures and vibrant landscapes. No prior experience needed!

WHEN: January 27, 8pm onwards
WHERE: Roastea - Curated Coffee And Tea Artisans, Kalyan Nagar
DETAILS: district.in

Jokes Only

Enjoy a standup comedy show titled *Jokes Aaj Kal* with a curated lineup of the city's handpicked comedians. Amidst the weekday chaos, this could be an event that asks you take a chill pill.

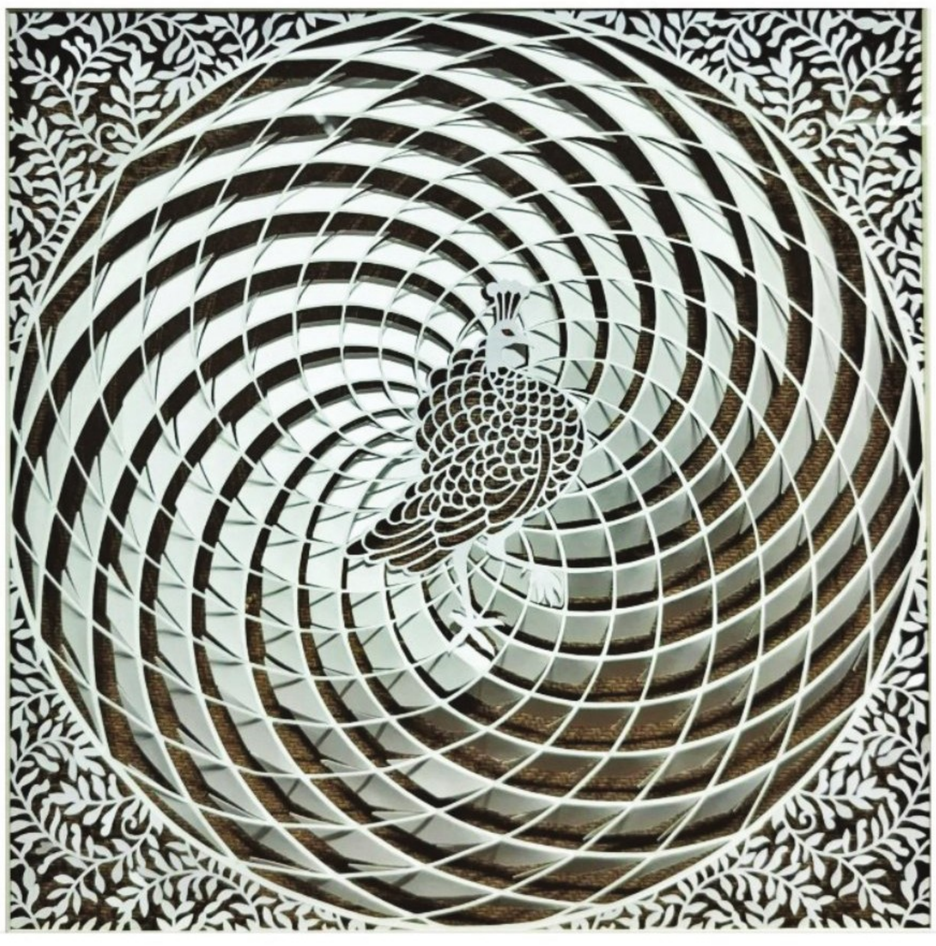
WHEN: January 29, 9pm
WHERE: Ministry of Comedy, Koramangala
DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

EXPRESS CONNECT

HAVE A RECIPE OR ART WORK TO SHARE, OR A QUESTION TO ASK?

@XpressBengaluru/@tniefeatures
bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com
@xpress_bengaluru

ARTCORNER



HERITAGE

Artist Parth Kothekar's intricate papercut artwork highlights the peacock in all its glory

E FOR EASYGOING

Here are first impressions of Maruti Suzuki's e-Vitara, set to hit the markets soon

LEKSHMI C PILLAI

FINALLY, Maruti Suzuki is launching an electric car. The much-awaited e-Vitara is set to hit the market this year.

It is clear that Maruti has been watching the market carefully, even as rivals rushed with e-launches in recent times. It was in no hurry to catch up.

Notably, before launching its first EV, the company installed over 2,000 charging stations across the length and breadth of India and trained 1.5 lakh technicians in servicing electric cars.

Maruti understands that what people expect from the brand is not just a car, but a reliable after-sales network as well. Now, let me share my first impressions of the Maruti Suzuki e-Vitara, after spending a day with it in Haryana.

DESIGN

Well, it can be polarising. Though it is named e-Vitara, it has no visual similarities with Maruti's mid-size SUVs, the Grand Vitara or Victoris.

The child in me would like to think the shape of the e-Vitara resembles a big frog flexing its muscles.

The 'Maruti look' is evident from many angles, but there are plenty of bulges, thick wheel arches, plastic cladding and sharp creases. One word to describe it is: muscular.

The LED headlamps and Y-shaped DRLs add a touch of elegance to the closed-grille face. Since the shoulder line is high and the roof tapers towards the rear, the window glass area on the second-row doors is relatively small.

The car sits on 18-inch alloy wheels with wide tyres. A roof spoiler, connected tail-lamps and heavy cladding complete the rear profile.

The e-Vitara measures 4.275 m in length, 1.8 m in width, and 1.6 m in height, with a wheelbase of 2.7 m. Though it is as long as the Grand Vitara and Victoris, it appears shorter due to the bulky design and excessive cladding.

INTERIOR

The interior design strikes a fine balance. Everything feels just right, with nothing overdone. A wide integrated screen housing both the infotainment system and the information display dominates the neatly laid-out dashboard.

The soft-touch brown leatherette panel in the centre, paired with dark silver AC vents, lends a classy touch. The squarish two-spoke steering wheel feels good to hold and looks pleasant. Thankfully, the e-Vitara avoids the hassle of touchscreen-only controls – AC and music functions are operated via physical switches.

The electric SUV features a 10-way power-adjustable driver seat, sliding and reclining rear seats and ventilated front seats. The front seats are supportive, thickly cushioned and comfortable.

XPRESS HIGHWAY
SEGMENT ON WHAT'S REVVING UP IN THE AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR

The integrated display system and twin-deck floating console create a premium and sophisticated digital cockpit experience, with ample storage space underneath. The drive selector and wireless charger are conveniently positioned.

The sunroof, however, is non-retractable, and that's a slight disappointment. The Infinity by Harman sound system delivers a premium audio experience. The e-Vitara also offers a best-in-segment rear seating system with a versatile 40:20:40 split, easy boot access, a rear armrest with cupholders, and reclining and sliding functionality to adjust boot space as per travel needs.

Rear-seat legroom is commendable, though the seating position is slightly knees-up. While the backrest reclines marginally, headroom may feel tight for taller passengers.

Overall, the cabin can feel smaller than it actually is for rear occupants, mainly due to the narrow windows and dark upholstery.

SAFETY

The e-Vitara has received a 5-star Bharat NCAP safety rating. As it is entirely built in India for global markets, this rating carries international benchmarking value as well.

Safety features include seven airbags, ESC, traction control, Level 2 ADAS, and a 360-degree camera. During my test drive, these features proved genuinely useful rather than merely decorative.

PERFORMANCE

The e-Vitara is built on the all-new HEARTECT-e electric vehicle platform. Made in India and destined for global markets, the 'Born EV' has been rigorously tested over one crore kilometres, across some of the harshest road conditions – from sand to snow.

The e-Vitara is offered with two battery options: 49 kWh battery producing 144 hp and 61 kWh battery producing 174 hp. I drove the version with the larger battery pack. Maruti claims a range of 543km for the 61 kWh variant. In real-world conditions, based on my 110km drive, a practical range of 400-450 km seems achievable. Power delivery is smooth and linear, with no sudden jerks. The car offers Eco, Normal and Sport drive modes, along with adjustable regenerative braking. It performs well both in city traffic and on highways.

The suspension setup is slightly on the firmer side. On poorly paved roads, it can feel a bit unsettled. More noticeably, road noise makes its way into the cabin more than expected.

MARUTI'S E-LEAP

- Established 2,000+ Maruti Suzuki exclusive charging points across 1,100+ cities
- Activated 1,500+ EV-ready service workshops in 1,100 cities
- Deployed a 1.5 lakh-strong specially trained EV workforce
- Charging points available at an average distance of 5-10 km in the top 100 cities
- Collaborated with 13 charge point operators to expand infrastructure
- Target of over 1 lakh charging points across India by 2030
- The 'e for me' mobile app enables hassle-free charging access across India

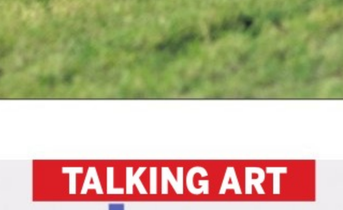
VERDICT

The test drive made it clear that Maruti's intention is not to make us say 'wow' or shock us with radical design or excessive features. Instead, the focus is firmly on range, reliability and basic comfort. A robust charging and service network will be a major advantage for e-Vitara customers. The most crucial aspect, however, is yet to be revealed – the price. Expect it to be highly competitive, thanks to simple packaging and avoidance of opulence.

The writer is a freelance auto expert who hosts TV shows and anchors the YouTube channel 'CARKADUVA'

TALKING ART

The catwalks of art



JITHA KARTHIKEYAN

(The writer is an artist and curator, passionate about making art accessible to the larger public)

WHEN the country opened up to streaming visuals from across the globe not so long ago, after an era of Doordarshan, many experienced jaw-dropping reactions after their first encounter with fashion, courtesy a wildly popular channel called FTV. Until then, the only haute couture that one ever came across was the much-awaited Miss India pageant on national TV.

The stunning designs opened up realms that many small towners hardly knew existed. Alas, the local tailors could never keep up! Long before these catwalks introduced us to the world of glamour, there have always been artists who used dressing as a means to make a statement, much like the art they created.

Their clothes were often an extension of their lives, reflecting their beliefs. The art, the artist, and the persona were but one whole package.

Mexican artist Frida Kahlo wore her cultural identity, weaving it into her outfits, her hairdo, and her accessories. Her wardrobe consisted of rebozos or shawls, skirts, holanes, and varied traditional Mexican garments. Religious symbols were painted on her corsets. Whether one recognises her artworks or not, there is no mistaking her distinctive unibrow, her elaborate hairdo with bright flowers and her colourful clothes.

Gustav Klimt, who dazzled us with his portraits of women in gold, primarily wore shapeless, long smocks stitched with very coarse canvas. To add to this, he was known to never wear undergarments. His unconventional attire was designed by his fashion designer companion, Emilie Floge, and you could perhaps call them the first brand couple! And how can the flamboyance of Spanish artist, Salvador Dali, with his ornate canes, his surrealist theatrical clothes, and iconic upturned moustache, not figure in this list? His lobster on pelvis dress and bone-quilted skeleton dress were all interlinked with his artistic identity. He even gave a lecture dressed in a diving suit.

Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama is a brand by herself. Often dubbed 'the polka dot lady', her art is filled with these dots and psychedelic colours and patterns. Creating a sense of infinity with her immersive installations, the artist wears a red wig and dotted clothes that resonate with the hallucinatory experiences that shaped her art. Michelangelo was so intense in his focus on work that he never changed his tunic and heavy boots for days, even sleeping in them. While painting the Sistine Chapel, he wore a turban to protect himself from the marble dust and his sweat; the look was so unique that it would have provided ample fodder to any fashion designer today. And what about our very own MF Husain? No matter what he wore – either a traditional attire or a three-piece suit – he was perpetually barefoot, thus making a rebellious proclamation about his disregard for conventions and establishing his own signature artistic style.

While the world mourns the end of an era, with the passing of Italian fashion designer Valentino, let us take a moment to remember every artist who lived their art through their attire choices, oblivious to the fact that they were a one-man/woman fashion empire by themselves. Three cheers to these original and unorthodox fashion icons, too!

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS **CLASSIFIEDS**

PUBLIC NOTICE
CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **ARVIND MAHESWARI** S/o Rameshwar Laddha, R/o No.31, Chandramukhi Patalamma Temple Street, Basavanagudi near South End Circle, Bengaluru Karnataka - 560004, have permanently changed my name from **ARVIND MAHESWARI** to **ARVIND LADDHA**, vide affidavit dated 24/01/2026, sworn before notary L.Puttaraju, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **YUVARAJ VINAYAGAM**, aged about 34 years, S/o. Vinayagam. S., R/o. No. C-129, DDTT LTD Industrial Suburb, Yeshwanthpura, Bengaluru–560022. I have Changed My Name From YUVARAJ VINAYAKAM To YUVARAJ VINAYAGAM Vide Affidavit Dated 24-01-2026, Sworn Before Notary B. Prasanna, Bengaluru.

AFFIDAVIT
I, **SURADHANI SAHOO,** D/o. Sri. Pravakar Sahoo, Aged about 38 years, residing at Flat No G7. Happy Homes Arka, Yamare Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Near Prestige City, V Kollahalli, Yamare, Domimasandra P.O.. Bangalore-562125.I declare that **"Surdhani Sahoo" and "Suradhani Sahoo"** refer to one and the same person-MYSELF before advocate and notary by **L GOPALAKRISHNA**

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **UPENDRA REDDY GARIMINTI** S/o Sankar Reddy Gariminti R/o No.S1, Second Floor, No. 21, Sree Nivasa, 1st Cross, RG Enclave Layout Hulimangala Village, Bengaluru Karnataka – 560105, have permanently changed my name from **UPENDRA REDDY GARIMINTI** to **UPENDRA GARIMINTI**, vide affidavit dated 26/01/2026, sworn before Notary L.Puttaraju, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **PRADEEP KUMAR. R** S/o **Ramakrishnappa H M** R/at No.31, 1st Main 2nd Cross, Hulimavu Bannergatta Road Bengaluru- 560076 have changed my name to **PRADEEP KUAMR. H R** Vide affidavit dated: 26/1/2026 Before Notary **Mohammed Hussain.K** Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Venkatesh R S/o Ramakrishnaiah residing at No 1280 Yallapura, Behind Anjaneeya Temple, Arakere Post, Tumakuru - 572106, have changed my name from **Venkatesha R** to **Venkatesh R,** vide affidavit dated 26/1/2026 sworn to before Aruna V Advocate and Notary Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Neha Tantuvoy W/o. Pawan Patidar R/a # Flat No. 10162, Prestige Royale Gardens, Doddaballapura Main Road, Avalahalli, Yelahanka, Bangalore-560 064 have changed my name from **NEHA TANTUVOY** to **NEHA PATIDAR** vide affidavit dated 22-01-2026 Sworn before Notary S.R. Ravikumar, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **BADRUNNISA**, aged 76 years, W/o. **Mohamed Ishaq Abdul Aziz**, residing of H. No. 7, 3rd Cross, Vinayaka Nagar, Old Guddadahalli, Mysore Road, Bengaluru-560026, have changed my name from **SYEDA BADRUNNISA** to **BADRUNNISA** vide affidavit dated 24-01-2026 sworn before Notary **DEEPA M.** BENGALURU.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **VINAYKUMAR M.R** S/o Late Revannasiddaiah .M, R/at #04, Maralusiddaiahnapalya, Mahadevapura Village and Post, Nelamangala Taluk, Bangalore Rural District, have changed my Son's name from **M.V CHARITH** (Old Name) to **CHARITH M.V** (New name) for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 11-12-2025, sworn before Notary R. Lakshminarayana, Bengaluru.

AFFIDAVIT
I, **SRI. PARMANAND YADAV**, S/o. Damodar Yadav, Aged about 48 years, Residing at No. 6, 1st Main, 1st Cross, Mysore Road, Byatarayanapura, A.K. Colony, Bangalore - 560 026, do hereby declare that the names **PARMANAND YADAV** & **MONOJ YADAV** belongs to the same person i.e., my name only. Vide affidavit dated 23.01.2026 sworn to before Mamatha .N.K, Advocate & Notary Public, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Afroz**, age about 56 Years, W/o. Masood Ahmed, Residing at No. 157, Tangamalai Nagar, Vinayaka Theater, Devarajeevanahalli Arabic College Post Bangalore-560045. have changed my name to **AFROZ BEGUM** vide Affidavit, dated 22/01/2026, sworn to before Advocate and Notary public Sumithra .N Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, SANJAY J, Presently residing at No.214, Mahaveer Gardenia, 32nd Cross, Behind Water Tank, Kumara swamy Layout 1st Stage, Bengaluru-560078, Karnataka, India, do hereby declare that my name is changed from **SANJAY J** to **SANJAY K J** vide affidavit dated 24-01-2026 sworn before notary H G Padmanabha Rao, Padmanabhanagar, Bengaluru.

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Puneeth Rajkumar felt *Valavaara* could be another *Kaaka Muttai*

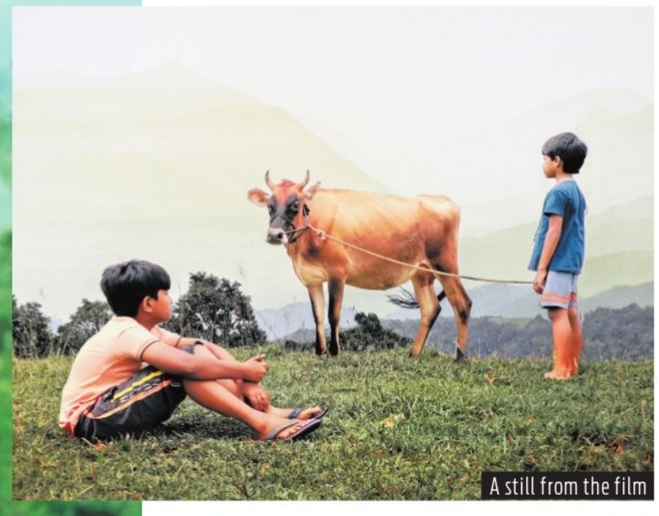
A SHARADHAA

VALAVAARA, as a title, refers to 'partiality,' says debutant director Sutan Gowda, and that idea anchors his one-day drama about a family, two brothers, and the quiet ways love and inheritance can tilt the scales. "When a younger child is born, the elder often feels there is partiality. It's universal," he says. Set in Sakleshpur, where Sutan grew up, the film blends what he calls a 'content-commercial' approach with local texture and culture.

Sutan's path to the director's chair took nearly 12 years. He worked with PRK Productions on *Maya Bazaar* and portions of *Junior,* both directed by Radhakrishna Reddy, and had assisted AP Arjun on *Raate* and *Airavata*. "If everything had gone well, *Valavaara* would have been made under PRK Productions," he says, recalling a pivotal meeting with Puneeth Rajkumar. "Puneeth loved the script and felt it could be another Kaaka Muttai. He told me to go ahead and gave me the freedom to choose the cast and technicians. Even his wife, Ashwini, was excited. Unfortunately, ten days after the narration, he passed away."

says Sutan Gowda, as he speaks about the film, introducing new faces, and turning a personal incident into a story

Sutan Gowda


A still from the film

Team Valavaara

However, the encouragement did not end there. Sunat says Shivarajkumar's daughter watched the trailer, spoke to her father, and then the star saw the film. "He was completely bowled over," the director says, adding that he is now waiting for the audience's response. "I may not have reached people with big promotions, but I'm sure the subject will do the talking."

Produced by J Giridhar under Morph Productions, *Valavaara* follows two boys on a single-day adventure to find their lost pet cow. The search becomes a journey of unexpected friendships, heavy responsibilities, and self-learning. "It's entertaining, but I made sure it also stays engaging and that values are absorbed subconsciously. There is no death for human values, even in reality, and when made as cinema."

Sutan reveals that this story has a personal touch. "I'm a farmer, and we had a cow whose delivery at the time was delayed by fifteen days. That incident, and small stories from my mother, helped me structure the plot," he says. To keep the film authentic, he cast largely fresh faces and theatre actors. "Newcomers bring freshness, and for realism we used the Sakleshpur dialect." The ensemble includes Vedik Kaushal, Shayan, Abhay, Malathesh, and Harshitha Gowda.

On the technical front, he says choosing Manikanth Kadri as composer was the best decision he took, alongside choosing Balaraj Gowda as cinematographer. "We wanted emotion without manipulation. If the audience walks out feeling connected and carrying the experience with them, then *Valavaara* has done its job," he concludes.

Travis Scott confirmed to be a part of *The Odyssey*

CE FEATURES

RAPPER Travis Scott was confirmed to be a part of Christopher Nolan's The Odyssey cast through a promotional video. Travis Scott earlier collaborated with Christopher Nolan for *Tenet*. He made a song for the film titled '*The Plan*'. Details regarding Scott's role in the film are yet to be revealed.

The upcoming film has Matt Damon playing King Odysseus of Ithaca, while Tom Holland portrays Telemachus, Odysseus' son, and Jon Bernthal plays Menelaus, Odysseus' ally. The film also portrays Anne Hathaway as Penelope, Zendaya as Athena, Robert Pattinson as Antinous, Charlize Theron as Circe, John Leguizamo as Eumaeus, Himesh Patel as Eurylochus, and Mia Goth as Melantho, among others. Details regarding Luipto Nyong'o's role in the film is yet to be revealed.

Howddo Huliya to get a unique hybrid release

This is considered to be a first-of-its-kind release for a Kannada film

CE FEATURES

IN a first-of-its-kind move, the Kannada comedy *Howddo Huliya*, starring Vaijanath Biradar, will release simultaneously in theatres and on the Talkies App OTT platform worldwide on January 30, in a bid to reach a wider audience. The film is produced by Swayamprabha Entertainment and Productions, the banner behind popular titles such as Appe Teacher, Love Cocktail, and Malgudi Days. With *Howddo Huliya*, the makers return with a rural comedy rooted in the culture and dialect of North Karnataka. The film blends humour, emotion, and social moments with dialogues written in the region's earthy Jawari style, giving it a strong local flavour.

Producers K Ratnakar Kamath and Ganesh R Kamath are supporting the film's hybrid release with solid brand partnerships, strengthening its wide launch across platforms. The story, screenplay, and dialogues are written by Govinde Gowda, known for his popularity from Comedy Khiladigalu. The film is helmed by Aneesh Poojary Venoor, who earlier directed Daskath.

While cinematography is handled by Santosh Gumpalaje and Deekshith Dharmasthala, music is composed by Kishore Shetty and Samarthan Rao.

The ensemble cast includes Vaijanath Biradar, Mimicry Gopi, Priya Savadi, Sooraj, Mallya Bagalkote, Santosh Rona, GG Umesh Kinnal, Danappa, and Sadananda, promising strong comic timing and relatable performances.

Billed as a family entertainer, *Howddo Huliya* draws its humour from everyday rural life, focusing on simple situations and natural conversations.

Adding to the buzz, the film's song Jwali Song - Lachchi Lachchi has been released on the Lachchi Talkies Kannada YouTube channel. With its dual release strategy, Howdo Huliya aims to bring laughs to audiences both in cinemas and at home, at the same time.

Raktha Kashmira was always meant for the big screen, says Rajendra Singh Babu

A still from the film

CE FEATURES

AFTER years of delays, veteran filmmaker SV Rajendra Singh Babu's Kannada film *Raktha Kashmira* is finally set to release in theatres across Karnataka this week. The director believes the wait has only strengthened his confidence in the film. "This film was always meant for the big screen," he explains. "We made it on a large scale, with real locations and strong emotions. I wanted audiences to experience it in theaters, not just on television or online."

Produced by MDM Productions, the film features Upendra and Ramya in lead roles, with Mars Suresh managing the statewide release.

The director shares that the story draws inspiration from events in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and terror attacks in Indian cities. "The story shows how terrorism impacts ordinary people. In our film, attacks occur not only in Kashmir but also in cities like Bengaluru, where thousands of innocent lives are lost. That suffering drives the hero and heroine to travel from Bengaluru to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to fight back," he states.

Rajendra Singh Babu adds that the team spent over a month filming in Kashmir. "We wanted authenticity. We shot in real locations, and many children acted in the film. The emotions needed to feel genuine," he says, describing it as a patriotic family drama.

One of the film's main highlights is an 18-minute special song featuring several top Kannada stars. "This is something no one has done before," the director points out. "Vishnuvardhan, Ambareesh, Srinath, Shivarajkumar, Puneeth Rajkumar, Jaggesh, Upendra, Ramesh Aravind, Darshan, Jai Jagadish, and Aditya all appear in one song. It wasn't easy to bring everyone together, but they supported the idea because the film discusses the nation."

While Rajendra Singh Babu has written the story and screenplay, MS Ramesh has written the dialogues, and music is by Gurukiran. "Every department worked with a lot of dedication. Even after so many years, the film's message remains relevant," he says.

The cast also includes Mukesh Rishi, Doddanna, Om Prakash Rao, Anil and Kuri Pratap.

RISHI–PRAKASH BELAWADI'S TRAVEL FILM TITLED *ANANTA PADMANAABHA*

CE FEATURES

THE maiden collaboration of Rishi and Prakash Belawadi has been titled *Ananta Padmanaabha*, with the makers unveiling the first-look poster and setting the tone for a reflective, road-driven comedy-drama. The film marks the directorial debut of Prashanth Rajappa, a well-known dialogue writer whose punchy lines have powered commercial hits such as *Adhyaksha, Victory, Ranna, Pogaru, Teertharoopa Tandeyavarige,* and *Anna From Mexico.*

With *Ananta Padmanaabha*, Rajappa pivots from high-decibel mass entertainers to a more intimate, character-led narrative. The film is structured as a travel story, using the format to explore relationships across two generations, blending humour with emotional introspection and quiet philosophical beats.

Rishi headlines the film, while Prakash Belawadi appears in what the team describes as a pivotal, performance-driven role. Anjali Anish plays the female lead. Though plot details are being kept under wraps, the makers indicate that the story reflects on life's values, changing perspectives, and the subtle conflicts and connections between youth and experience.

Prior to the title reveal, the team had released brief video teasers that hinted at the film's tone, building curiosity around the project. However, the title further suggests a film that leans into mood and meaning as much as narrative momentum.

Produced by Amrej Suryavanshi, *Ananta Padmanaabha* is currently nearing completion, with only two songs left to be filmed. Principal photography has taken place across Bengaluru, Sagara, and the lush surroundings of Thirthahalli.

Music is composed by Ashwin P Kumar, while cinematography is by Venus Nagaraj Murthy. With its blend of generational drama and travel storytelling, *Ananta Padmanaabha* is expected to hit theatres soon.

Seetha Payana is a journey of the heart: Arjun Sarja

CE FEATURES

WITH *Seetha Payana* set for a worldwide Valentine's Day release on Feb. 14, actor-director-producer Arjun Sarja is returning to the director's chair with what he describes as one of his most personal stories. Produced under the Sree Ram Films International banner, the film stars Niranjan Sudhindra and Aishwarya Arjun in the lead roles and will release in five languages.

Interacting with media in Bengaluru, Arjun Sarja said, "*Seetha Payana* is my second directorial in Kannada, though I've directed close to 15 films across languages. What makes this special is that I wrote this story nearly 13 years ago. I was waiting for the right moment to make it, and now the time felt right."

The project is also a family collaboration, with his daughter Aishwarya playing the female lead and Arjun himself appearing in an acting role. "It's a beautiful feeling to direct my daughter in a film like this," he said, adding, "Along with her and Niranjan, we also have experienced actors like Prakash Raj, Sathyaraj and Kovai Sarala. Their presence added a lot of depth to the film."

Team Seetha Payana

Arjun adds that Dhruva Sarja will be seen in a special appearance. "Dhruva has done a special role, and I'm sure his fans will be happy to see him in this film," he noted.

On the film's theme, Arjun is clear that *Seetha Payana* goes beyond a simple travel narrative. "This is not just a physical journey. It's a journey of the mind, a journey of values, and a journey of emotions. We wanted to tell a story that makes people reflect, but also leave the theatre with a smile."

Aishwarya Arjun, who returns to Kannada cinema after a gap, calls the film a wholesome family entertainer. "After *Prema Baraha*, I'm very happy to be back with Seetha Payana. Appa has directed a film that everyone can watch together as a family," she said, adding, "Working with seniors like Prakash Raj, Sathyaraj and my father has been very special. The songs have already received a good response, and two more will be released soon."

Lead actor Niranjan Sudhindra echoed the sentiment. "The entire team felt like family. It never felt like I was working with a separate unit. My character has good emotional weight, and I'm really happy with how it has shaped up," said the actor.

With music by Anup Rubens, cinematography by Balamurugan and editing by Ayub, *Seetha Payana* places itself as a feel-good, value-driven theatrical offering for the festive weekend.